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PAUL THE APOSTLE

As Viewed by a Layman

BY

EDWARD H. HALL

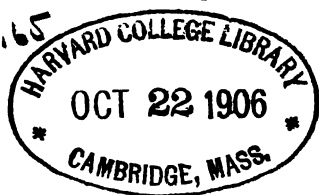
AUTHOR OF "PAPAS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES"

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PAUL THE APOSTLE

AS VIEWED BY A LAYMAN

CHAPTER I

THE CONVERT

IN the nebulous hours which mark the birth of Christianity one figure alone, apart from the founder himself, stands out with any degree of definiteness. The immediate companions of Jesus who had received first-hand impressions of his personality have left little trace. The twelve Apostles, except for a few vague traditions concerning Peter, and still vaguer concerning John,¹ are hardly more than names. The more interest attaches therefore to the one actor whose individuality has in any sense survived. Without extravagant

¹ The opening chapters of Acts give much prominence to Peter, with slight allusions to John ; otherwise nothing is known of either beside vague traditions from unknown sources. The two Epistles ascribed to Peter, and the three ascribed to John, are too doubtful to throw much light upon the two apostles.

claims for the Apostle Paul as compared with other historic characters of the time, his career has an inexhaustible charm for those who care for the spiritual side of human history or for its religious beginnings. Viewing him simply as a contributor to the world's higher growth it is worth our while, though the ground has been so often travelled before, to see how his figure bears the light of modern investigation.

What we know of Paul is drawn from two sources: the few and brief letters which have survived from his own hand, and the fragmentary narrative of the early church, under the name of *The Acts of the Apostles*, which has come down to us from the second century.¹ Writings from so in-

¹ *The Acts* is plainly a composite writing drawn from sources of different dates. As none of the early Christian writers shows any clear acquaintance with it before A. D. 170 (Irenaeus, *Haer.* iii. 12, 9) and the first distinct mention of it by name is in a Scripture canon of the latter part of the second century, (*Muratorian Fragment*, chap. 2) it cannot be placed with any certainty before A. D. 100. Probably it was much later. Among the primitive documents used by the author are the so-called "we-passages," fragments of an itinerary kept by some unknown companion of Paul (*A.* xvi. 10-xvii. 1; xx. 5-xxi. 18;

choate a period, during the preliminary stages of church organization, and before the notion of historic archives or the demand for them had arisen, cannot have the precise outlines of later literature, and we must not demand too much of these scanty remains. It should always be borne in mind that the exalted mood in which the Christian communities lived for a full generation, however dramatic in itself, was necessarily fatal to the composition of permanent chronicles. While awaiting hourly the coming catastrophe in which all existing institutions were to disappear, little heed could be paid to passing events. Indeed, why hand down memorials of an epoch so soon to end; whose closing scenes those then upon the stage were themselves to wit-

xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16). As an early tradition ascribes the book, as well as the third Gospel, to Luke, an otherwise unknown personage, it is quite possible that the writer of these passages was actually Luke, and that his name when the book was finally admitted to the Canon, was given to the whole.

Holtzmann places Acts somewhere between A. D. 80 and the middle of the second century (*Hand-Commentar*, i. 312, 322; *Einleitung*, 405); Jülicher gives 100-105 (*Einl.* 262); Harnack, 80-93 (*Chronol.* 250); Renan, about 80 (*Les Apotr.* xxii.); Pfeiderer, later than 100 (*Urchris.* i. 547).

ness?¹ Of these impending events no one was surer than the Apostle Paul. The first impression made upon us by his epistles is the intent attitude of expectancy which they betray on the part of writer and readers alike.² No one had less to say than he of times beyond his own generation, except as connected with the coming glories of the heavenly kingdom. Naturally the records that remain bear the stamp of their age. Notwithstanding these inevitable peculiarities, however, and the thousand obscurities which baffle us just where we long for clearer light, the archaic writings from which we are to draw, taken as we find them, and strictly separated from the later literature or traditions which sprang from them, give us an invaluable picture of early Christian life; the only picture at any rate which the world possesses. I need not add that their archaic features, however embarrassing to modern ways of thinking, are precisely what

¹ Mt. (Matthew) xvi. 28, xxiv. 30-34; 1 Thess. iv. 14-17; 2 Pet. iii. 10.

² 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, xv. 51, 2; 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Thess. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23; Phil. iii. 20; Col. ii. 4.

we are to hold fast in their primitive purity. It is not twentieth century religion that we are to seek in these dim pages, but first century religion.

For Paul's active entrance upon the Christian field, we have to pass over the first ten or fifteen years after the Master's death, and turn to the city of Antioch about A.D. 46.¹ The Book of Acts records great commotion in the Jewish colony of Antioch at this time over the question of circumcision. The sect of the Nazarenes, which seems to have been numerous here, had departed from the stricter observances of the Apostles at Jerusalem.

¹ A. xi. 25. All dates for Paul's life are, within certain limits, conjectural. The best starting-point seems to me A. xxiv. 27; as the year when Festus supplanted Felix can be fixed with some probability as about A. D. 55. Reckoning backward from this year, with such assistance as is given us by xx. 3, 31, xix. 10, xviii. 11, Gal. i. 18, ii. 1, we reach A. D. 30 as the approximate date of Paul's conversion. Then, fourteen or fifteen years later Barnabas brought him to Antioch, A. D. 46. As it is impossible to tell whether the fourteen years mentioned in Gal. ii. 1 go back to the beginning or only to the Jerusalem visit (i. 18) and as the time spent in each journey is wholly problematical, it will be seen that with the best purpose in the world our chronological data must remain uncertain. See Harnack, *Chron.* 233-239; Meyer, *Kommentar; Apostelg. Einleit.*, 4; Hausrath, *Time of Apos.* iii. 55 n.; Hatch in *Encyc. Bib.* iii. 3619.

Surrounded by Gentiles, as well as by Jewish proselytes,¹ they opened their doors to converts from those ranks with dangerous freedom. As no separation from the Jewish church had yet taken place, if it had ever been contemplated, while the primitive disciples held the ancient forms in special reverence,² the rite of circumcision was naturally regarded as a necessary condition of admission to the messianic communities, and the action of the Antioch colony was looked upon with much alarm. Barnabas, a native of Cyprus who had joined the circle of disciples in its earlier hours, and had been the first to welcome Saul when the others distrusted him,³ was sent by them to the scene of trouble, and Barnabas in turn bethought himself at once of the young convert, sought him in his retirement at Tarsus, and brought him to Antioch.⁴ The fragmentary character of Acts makes it difficult here to trace

¹ Schürer, *Hist. of Jewish People*, ii. 2, 291-327, 548-575.

² A. ii. 46, iii. 1, v. 42, x. 9, 14.

³ A. iv. 36; ix. 27. Traditions differed, whether the Apostles rejected Paul as a doubtful convert, or he had himself shown little anxiety to join them. *Comp. A. ix. 26; Gal. i. 17-19.*

⁴ Gal. i. 22; A. xi. 22, 25, 26.

the sequence of events exactly,¹ but it is clear that from this time Saul, who was soon known as Paul,² came definitely to the front as an ardent preacher of the new faith.

Looking for a moment to discover the antecedents of this important convert from the Jewish ranks, we find at once that we have only vague traditions to guide us. Paul himself has taken singularly little trouble to supply us with the needed facts, being quite unconscious that his personal history was to become an object of curiosity to far-distant generations. On the only occasion when he recurs to his conversion, he tells us in a few words that as a Jew he had been "more exceedingly zealous" than his fellows

¹ An apparently independent tradition, which our author works in as best he can (A. xiii. 1) represents Paul as appearing for the first time in the selection of disciples for a mission to Cyprus and Asia Minor. Saul is mentioned as quite unknown, and as holding a subordinate position in a group of "prophets and teachers."

² A. xiii. 9 gives the name Paul for the first time, but there is no reason to assume that a formal change of name was made at this or any special moment. As the Latin form for Saul (Paulus) was a familiar surname (xiii. 7) it would naturally come into use through intercourse with the Roman world. In his own writings he always calls himself Paul. (Weizsäcker, *Apostolic Age*, i. 80.) For similar cases, see xv. 37, 39; Col. iv. 11.

of the traditions of the fathers, "persecuting beyond measure the church of God and wasting it," but while engaged in these assaults that he had received an inward revelation which he recognized as a call from above to preach the very Jesus whom he had persecuted.¹ This is all. According to his account, the original disciples of Jesus, sole holders of the faith, had no hand in his conversion whatever. Nor did he seek them out on adopting their belief. On the contrary, he remained for three years in the distant regions of Arabia where the vision had occurred, going finally to Jerusalem only for a brief visit to meet Peter and James, then leaving Jerusalem without further attempt to acquaint himself with the companions of Jesus, and passing on to the "regions of Syria and Cilicia," where he remained until summoned by Barnabas to Antioch.²

On reading this slight narrative, we cannot help asking ourselves what was the real cause of Paul's conversion. Had he been intimate with the immediate followers of

¹ Gal. i. 13-16.

² Gal. i. 18, 19, 21.

Jesus, it might have come about naturally as he listened to the precepts of their Master, or heard them describe the beauty and nobility of his character. But as we have seen no such intercourse had existed. Till the hour of his conversion they had been strangers to him and foes. We must look elsewhere than to them for the influences which had led to this supreme crisis of Paul's life. The Book of Acts, it is true, unaware of Paul's simpler account, amplifies the vision near Damascus into a startling supernatural event, changing Paul on the moment from a mocking Jew into a submissive Christian.¹ But for minds of the higher intellectual or spiritual quality, such absolute breaks between present and past are unsupposable. If it is the same Paul here, before and after, some part of his great conflict must have been fought out in advance. We are thrown back upon his previous life therefore to explain how any vision could have so transformed him.

We have to remember that the longings

¹ A. ix. 3-9.

for a Messiah were by no means confined to the little circle of Christian disciples. The pages of the Gospels alone show how general such expectations were at this period.¹ It must be remembered, too, that these expectations took many forms. There was no single announcement of a Messiah, accepted by all, but only vague prophecies to be interpreted almost at will. While the many were looking for an earthly descendant of David to restore the lost glories of the kingdom,² not a few had caught the mystic spirit of the age and conceived of the Messiah as an exalted being existing in heavenly regions from the beginning, to descend, in due time, among men, and fulfil the divine scheme of regeneration. Jewish theology, like other religious beliefs of the time, peopled the heavenly spheres with countless ranks of angelic natures, "gods many and lords many." For such as were given to religious speculation, it was easy to conceive

¹ Mt. iii. 2, iv. 17, x. 7-23, xi. 3, xvi. 27, 28, xix. 27-30, xxiv. 3-44; L. xxii. 24, 29, 30.

² A. i. 6; M. (Mark) xi. 10.

of the Messiah as one of these celestial beings, highest in the heavenly hosts.¹ The Jewish apocryphal literature,² no less than the writings of Philo, show how far these speculations had been carried in Paul's time; and while there is no reason to assume that he belonged to any philosophical school, or was familiar with Philo, yet as an intelligent enquirer, with the opportunities which tradition ascribes to him,³ he could not have been ignorant of these meditations or indifferent to them. They were as accessible to the synagogues of Palestine as to those of

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 5; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 14, xii. 22; Mt. iv. 11, xiii. 39, 49, xviii. 10, xxiv. 36, xxv. 31; Gen. xxviii. 12, xviii. 1-3; Ps. xci. 11. See Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, § 34, 3.

² Wis. Sol. i. 7, vii. 22-24, ix. 9, xvi. 5-13, xviii. 15, 16; Prov. viii. 22. *Ecclesiasticus* and the *Wisdom of Solomon* were probably written a century or two before Christ. See Pfeid. Urch. ii. Absch. 3; Hausrath, *Time of Apostles*, iii. 16-30; Thackeray, *Relation of St. Paul to Jewish Thought*, chaps. i., ix.; Brückner, *Entstehung d. Paul, Christologie*.

For specimens of the apocalyptic literature of the first Christian century, in which the Messiah appears as a preëxistent and celestial being, see *Apocalypses of Enoch*, *Fourth Esdras*, *Baruch*. It should be remembered that the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament prevalent in Paul's time represented Christ as preëxistent through the entire history of Israel. (1 Cor. x. 4, 9-11.)

³ A. xxii. 3.

Alexandria. Grant any speculative tendencies on Paul's part, suppose him to have reflected deeply upon these mystic sayings, or to have listened eagerly to the prophecies that the coming of the Messiah was close at hand, and we can see that before hearing of Jesus of Nazareth, or ever encountering his disciples, he was ready to be impressed by their ardent belief that this heavenly visitant had already appeared among them. Their tales of his earthly life might not attract him, for it was no human deliverer that he was seeking ; but their report, that, although crucified, he was still living and was wont to appear among them, that he had escaped from the grave and shown himself possessed of spiritual qualities which death could not touch, was something to appeal to his religious imagination. If their reports were really true, why might this not be in very fact the Son of God awaited for ages, descending at last among men ? Should he appear to him, Saul, as those disciples claimed that he had appeared to them, he would ask no other proof.

From this point of view, the miraculous story in the Book of Acts becomes more intelligible to us. As we have seen, that book gives a much fuller account of the incident near Damascus than we get from Paul. Traditions had reached the author's hands, quite irreconcilable in their details,¹ and with a palpable mythological character on their face, which yet show how the story had come down to later generations. The historical kernel is not very difficult to discern. Saul's attention was first called to the followers of Jesus, according to this book, by the excitement caused by the preaching of Stephen. Possibly he was present in the foreign synagogues where Stephen's free dealing with the Jewish Scriptures was the subject of angry dispute. In any case, he had witnessed the stoning of Stephen, and had been excited by the words of that revolutionist to a violent persecution of the disciples of the Lord.² It was on his way to Damascus, to carry out this ma-

¹ A. ix. 3-9, xxii. 6-13, xxvi. 12-18.

² A. vi. 5, vii. 57, 58, viii. 1-3.

lign purpose, that the dramatic incident occurred which changed him from a persecutor to a champion of the new faith. "As he journeyed, he came near Damascus : and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven : and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."¹ The moment of which he had dreamed had come. The Jesus who had been ignominiously crucified, and laid in the grave, was indeed still living. He himself had seen him : had seen him in celestial glory ; no mortal man but an immortal spirit, shining in the light which betokens the heavenly nature. The Messiah, awaiting in the presence of God the fulfilment of the divine purposes, had at last appeared.

These spiritual crises can never be clearly analyzed, even by the subjects of them ; and it would be foolish to assume that we can

¹ A. ix. 3-5.

recover, after the lapse of many centuries, the exact facts of the conversion of Paul. We are not without our helps, however, and the safest clue is supplied by the apostle himself. He is relating to the Corinthians, many years later, a strange experience which had once befallen him. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. Yet I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."¹

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 1-4. According to the prevailing Jewish notion, the upper world consisted of several successive heavens, commonly thought of as seven, in the highest of which was Paradise, the special abode of God and dwelling-place of the blest. (Comp. 4 Esdr. iii. 6, vii. 53; Enoch xxxix, 3-7, lx. 8, 23. Paul, if we are to construe his language strictly, conceived of Paradise as in the third heaven. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, § 33; Kabisch, *Eschatologie des Paulus*, 212, 222.) In the Gospels

Though this may not refer directly to the Damascus journey, supposing that Paul gives his dates correctly, there is little question that it describes a similar psychological phenomenon.¹ It calls up as we read familiar visions or trances, known in all ages, which arise from obscure nervous conditions, and produce upon the patient vivid effects of reality. Paul himself considers these trances as in some way connected with painful infirmities of the flesh to which he was subject, and against which he struggled in vain. In one case, at least, they brought him immediate communication with the Lord: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said

we find still another conception of these regions of the departed; Paradise and Hades being in full sight of each other. L. xvi. 23; comp. Weber, § 74.

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2. "Fourteen years ago," if any of our dates are exact, would place this incident eight or ten years after his conversion; though many critics try to make the two identical. Apparently Paul had many such experiences.

unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”¹ Paul himself, as we see, has no doubt of the supernatural import of these trances. They lift him into regions where he listens to heavenly voices, receiving occult revelations granted to him alone. In more than one of the great crises of his after life we shall find him referring to his visions as his trusted medium for intercourse with God or Christ. They give him actual sight of the risen Jesus; they are his proofs of the resurrection, and, as he implies, have come to the other disciples also, to create their faith in this great fact. These visions prompt him to his missionary enterprises, dictate his addresses, warn him of danger, prefigure coming events, bring him precepts direct from the Master, far more commanding and imperative than any commandments handed down by the disciples. They are

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 7-9. It is the province of physicians or psychologists to explain these attacks, but commentators are generally agreed in regarding Paul's disease as some form of epilepsy. Psychic investigations of the present day make his experience seem quite an ordinary phenomenon.

the fruitful source of all his inspirations. It is easy to imagine, therefore, the mighty effect wrought upon his soul when the spiritual Christ, loosed from the bonds of flesh, after ascending again to his heavenly home, appeared to him while fresh from his persecutions of the disciples at Jerusalem. In the moment of his conversion, Paul thus comes before us as a man abnormally sensitive to spiritual impressions, and of a nature to which exalted hours of insight and belief are familiar.¹

Returning to our narrative in Acts, we find there an essentially different account of the events following upon Paul's conversion from that given by Paul himself. So far from remaining three years quietly in Damascus, and then visiting Jerusalem only to see Peter, and James, the Lord's brother,

¹ A. ix. 4-6, 12, xviii. 9, xxii. 18; 1 Cor. vii. 10, xi. 23, xv. 5-8; 1 Thess. iv. 15.

Philo, a contemporary of Paul, and Plotinus two centuries later, claim for themselves quite similar experiences with those of Paul, bringing them, as in Paul's case, into immediate communion with Deity. Philo, *De Migrat.* Abr. 7, 34; *De Mund. Opif.* 23; *Leg. Alleg.* iii. 33; *Cherub.* 14; *Quis Her.* 52, 53 — *Porphyrus, Vita Plotini*, ch. 1, 10, 23.

he is represented as fleeing at once to Jerusalem, where he "assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him." Instead of meeting only the two chief leaders, as he himself declares, all the disciples are alike interested in the new-comer, and when danger threatened, "they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus."¹

Fortunately we are not obliged to reconcile these conflicting records, but may accept them both as narratives of the same events reported from different points of view. Paul's own memories, taken down, if the Epistle of the Galatians is really his, so soon after the occurrence,² can hardly be challenged in the main; while the Acts on the other hand, while preserving for us

¹ Gal. i. 17, 18; A. ix. 23-30.

² Galatians is commonly placed about A. D. 55.

some incidents forgotten by Paul, evidently preserves also the devices resorted to, in circles where the Epistles were unknown, to explain Paul's singular independence of the earlier disciples. In any case, we learn that after his short visit to Jerusalem, a period of eleven years follow, which in the Acts are an absolute blank, and which Paul himself covers with the simple statement: "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."¹ These three verses constitute the sole report which history gives of the first decade of the great apostle's ministry. If he entered at once upon an earnest propaganda of his new beliefs, the memory of it, or of the places which he visited, has been wholly lost. Are we to suppose then that he spent these years in retirement, to face the momentous problems which rose before his mind, demanding of him a readjustment

¹ Gal. i. 21-23. Comp. A. xi. 19, 25.

of his old beliefs? These are questions which have never been answered, though commentators have been busy upon them since commentaries began. Without attempting a fresh solution of the enigma, we must accept this gap in the records as a striking illustration of what is to be reckoned with in writing of times from which no first-hand records survive. In any case, the extraordinary isolation in which, by his own confession, these hours were spent, deliberately rejecting the only companionship which could have familiarized him with the career or character of the great teacher to whose service he was dedicating himself, is a fact to be borne in mind in estimating the personality we are studying. When all allowance for insufficient data is made, this studied aloofness, this stern reliance upon his own inward illumination, and upon this alone, stands out in startling relief. He spares no colors in describing it. "I certify you, brethren," he says to the Galatians, "that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I

taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . But when it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood ; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me ; but I went into Arabia. . . . Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold before God, I lie not."¹ Whatever our judgment upon Paul on other points, we must recognize that he brings a message of his own, which he regards as direct from heaven, with which no other gospel, not even that of the companions of Jesus, is to interfere.

This brings us back to Paul's appearance at Antioch, where this independent attitude was to be so sharply tested. The disciples at Jerusalem, notwithstanding occasional calls to wider fields,² were still true to all the re-

¹ Gal. i. 11-20.

² A. viii. 4-25, 26-40; ix. 32-x. 48.

quirements of the temple worship, and continued "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."¹ When therefore it was found that Barnabas and Paul were addressing Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, and even making light of the ceremony of circumcision, those missionaries were summoned to Jerusalem, according to Acts, to give account of their ministry.² The moment was a serious one for the little circle of believers, hesitating whether to cling to its inherited faith, or to strike out for itself in the paths of dissent.

The circumstances under which this momentous audience was held are quite differently narrated by our two authorities.³ The compiler of Acts describes an enthusiastic reception of Barnabas and Paul on the

¹ A. ii. 46, iii. 1, x. 9, 14, xi. 19.

² A. xv. 2.

³ A. xv. 1-30; Gal. ii. 1-10. There is little doubt that the same incident is referred to in these two passages, as the main features are so similar. If not, we have to assume that the compiler of Acts knew nothing of this critical moment of Paul's career. Harnack assumes that two conventions were held, and that A. xv. is a conglomerate of the traditions from both. *Ausbreitung d. Christenthums*, 42, 43.

part of the "church" at Jerusalem ; disturbed only by a handful of Pharisees among them, who insisted that "it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." The "apostles and elders" then meet, and a harmonious discussion follows, in which Peter and James vie with each other in welcoming the Gentiles into the church, and confess that to insist upon circumcision was to "put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Peter indeed claims to have been himself; by divine appointment, the first preacher to the Gentiles ; while James, known to tradition as the most rigid of zealots in his observance of the law,¹ announces that the prophets of old had foretold the coming of the Gentiles into the kingdom of the Lord. The stumbling-block of circumcision being thus happily removed, the following singular precepts are agreed upon, to be made binding on all the churches : "That they abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from

¹ Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. ii. 23, 4-7.

things strangled, and from fornication." Paul and Barnabas then depart from Jerusalem, carrying with them this decision of the conclave, and prepared to deliver it to all whom they visited.¹

Paul's recollections of the affair, embodied five or six years afterwards in his letter to the Galatians, are in quite a different tone. As he remembers, he came to Jerusalem not as a delegate from Antioch, but of his own accord, by special revelation in fact, and on a private errand to those who were considered the chief disciples. Besides Barnabas, Titus, a young Greek convert, unknown to the author of Acts, accompanied him, and certain enemies of Paul insisted that Titus should be circumcised. Paul regarded this as deliberately intended to entrap him, and flatly refused. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour."² Paul's de-

¹ A. xv. 5-31.

² Gal. ii. 4, 5.

termination to claim for himself absolute independence of action in the face of the older disciples, is obvious through this entire episode. Overzealous champions of those apostles had no doubt intruded themselves into the affair, and perhaps brought on the whole dispute. Possibly the Galatians whom he is addressing had been themselves warned against accepting his authority as on the same footing with that of the Jerusalem teachers, and this fact added fresh acerbity to Paul's remarks. In any case his sensitiveness upon this point is apparent, and he asserts for himself once for all a revelation as direct and binding as that which the apostles had received from the Master. Even the so-called "pillars" of the church had not influenced him in his decision. "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person; for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." Indeed so far from winning him to their own views, they found themselves yielding to his. They saw that he

had a gospel of his own to preach, with which it was unwise for them to interfere. Let them divide the work between them then, and let neither invade the province of the other. "When they saw," says Paul, "that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter, — and when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."¹

So far as appears this conclusion was reached on friendly terms, each recognizing the good faith of the other. But the prejudices of centuries cannot be put aside in an hour; as the sequel was at once to prove. Peter followed Paul on his return to Antioch, apparently attracted by his novel ideas, and ready to coöperate in his work. He even allowed himself to eat at the same table with the Gentile converts. But on the arrival of other emissaries from Jerusalem, sent by the

¹ Gal. ii. 6-9.

less complaisant James to watch the proceedings, Peter became alarmed at his own temerity, and withdrew at once from such compromising companionship. He even persuaded Barnabas that, proper though it might be to preach the gospel to the heathen, it was a very different thing to sit at the same table with them. "And the other Jews played the hypocrite with him (Peter), insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their hypocrisy." This was the hardest blow of all, and was met by Paul with a frankness which betrayed beyond further doubt the nature of this new apostle. It is the most curious episode in the New Testament. When we remember the relation which Peter and Paul are to take towards each other in later Christian history, we stand almost aghast at this early encounter, as recorded by one of the actors. "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. . . . When I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou being a

Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"¹ The Book of Acts knows nothing of this startling occurrence. The traditions from which that author drew had come down apparently through circles where the memory of Peter was especially honored. It is a fine tribute to the impartiality of the final collectors of these writings that this face-to-face conflict between the two great leaders has been allowed to stand in its archaic simplicity. It tells its own story which the compilers do not attempt to tone down. Their records unfortunately do not reveal the outcome of this grave dispute. From this moment the mutual relations of Peter and Paul are wholly unknown to us. Our records know nothing more of Peter.²

¹ Gal. ii. 11-14.

² For traditions regarding Peter's later career and death, which sprang up towards the end of the century and afterwards, see Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. v.; Iren. Haer. iii. 1, 1; iii. 3, 2; Tertullian, Scorp. 15; Eusebius, H. E. ii. 14, 25; Jerome. Vir. Illustr. 1. Most of these belong to the period when the Roman church had become important and all legends were seized upon which brought the Apostle Peter into connection with it. J. xxi.

It is not necessary to accentuate further the palpable discrepancies here between our two authorities. Rather than labor to reconcile them it is more to the purpose to let the two pictures stand side by side in their full originality. They show how differently the great events of history are remembered by those who took part in them. While we cannot hesitate for a moment to accept Paul's own account in its essential features, he might well have forgotten certain details, such as the occasional labors of Peter in the Gentile field, and other incidents which the author of Acts has carefully preserved.¹ Very likely many slighter enterprises of the same kind were ventured before the question came up for final decision. While Paul, writing under special provocation, gives full force to the antagonisms he had encountered

18, 19 and 1 Pet. v. 13, whether genuine or not, have some weight as pointing to the same traditions. Comp. Renan, *Antichrist*, 29 n, 186; Harnack, *Ausbreitung*, 43, 44.

¹ The four precepts referred to A. xv. 20, 28-31, although never alluded to by Paul, and probably not treated very seriously by him, are not likely to have been wholly invented. They reveal the kind of compromises, behind the scenes, which were necessary to bring about the final harmony. Bacon, *Story of St. Paul*, 133.

at Jerusalem, the ecclesiastical historian of a later generation would as naturally incline to minimize the discords of those sacred hours, and show the fundamental harmony which lay beneath the disputes of the holy fathers of the church.¹ From our point of view, we are interested mainly in noting how amicably on the whole this first great collision ended. The parties agreed to differ. The situation was of course full of the chances for friction. As events proved, sharp encounters were to follow again and again among the narrower partisans on both sides, which might have led to graver misunderstandings had not the leaders shown themselves too high-minded and too conscious of the greatness of their mission to allow these party brawls to divide them permanently. As it was, the cleavage thus begun was to run increasingly through the annals of the early church. Christianity

¹ The discrepancies between Paul's Epistles and the Acts have been a familiar battle-ground since Baur's epoch-making writings in the early part of the last century. For a concise summary of this chapter of critical history, see Holtzmann's *Einleitung*, 164-188. Comp. Baur, *Paulus*; Schwegler, *Nachapostol. Zeitalter*. For later discussions, Weizsäcker, *Apos. Age*; Hausrath, *N. Test. Times*; Pfeiderer, *Urchristenthum*.

had to learn, from its cradle, the useful lesson of preserving what unity of faith it could among widely diverging conceptions of the truth. Meantime Paul showed himself plainly the man for the hour. With his larger training such trivial matters as circumcision or idol meats could have had slight weight from the beginning. No doubt he had already outgrown their bondage, and now, in the clearer light which filled his soul, they became contemptible indeed. In his new vision of the messianic reign, untrodden fields opened before him. He was to gather his converts from all sources into the coming kingdom. The old prophecies of the Messiah's universal sway could be fulfilled in other ways than through the Davidic dynasty; through appeals to profounder and more universal instincts. In these early battles he had secured for himself the opportunity of preaching his wider gospel undisturbed.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSIONARY

ON finishing his work at Antioch, Paul entered with zeal upon the further spread of his new faith. The instinct of the missionary, perhaps also the love of travel or the spirit of adventure, was strong within him. The author of Acts has saved for us such vague records of these wanderings as could be collected at the time, and has arranged them as best he could into three separate journeyings. Evidently his materials were of the scantiest. On the first journey, in which, according to Acts, Barnabas was at first the moving spirit, the missionaries went through Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia in Asia Minor, returning to Antioch as their headquarters.¹ The second

¹ A. xiii. xiv.

journey, undertaken for the purpose of re-visiting the communities already established in Asia Minor, was extended to Phrygia and Galatia, and thence to Macedonia, Athens, and Corinth; the disciples returning again, after a long stay in Corinth, to Antioch. The beginning of this expedition is memorable for a temporary estrangement between Paul and Barnabas. According to the Acts this occurred from the pettiest of causes; but Paul's account of the previous affair at Antioch leads us to suppose that the real ground may have been that Barnabas then sided with Peter. However this may be, we can only regret that so interesting a personage, who seemed destined for an important career, should so soon drop from view. So far as the New Testament records are concerned Barnabas disappears, from this moment, from Christian history.¹ On his third journey, Paul is represented as retracing his steps through Phrygia and Galatia, then spending two or three years in Ephesus,

¹ A. xv. 36-xviii. 22; Gal. ii. 11-14. The only other references to Barnabas are 1 Cor. ix. 6; Col. iv. 10.

his longest stay according to Acts in any one place. Thence he travelled again to Greece, returning by the coast of Asia Minor to Cesarea and Jerusalem.¹

At no point do our two authorities differ more widely than in their accounts of these travels. According to Paul's epistles, the friction foreshadowed in the previous chapter showed itself in full force from the beginning. Certain self-appointed guardians of the faith seem to have been persistently at work to counteract Paul's dangerous doctrines. In almost every community which he founded seeds of discord and strife are sown immediately upon his departure. Sometimes it is the old question of circumcision that is at stake ; sometimes the eating of forbidden meats ; sometimes their Sabbath observances ; sometimes his right to figure as an apostle at all. "O foolish Galatians," he writes, soon after leaving that unknown region, "who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth. . . Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us

¹ A. xviii. 23-xxi. 15.

free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”¹ To the Romans he writes: “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”² “Am I not an apostle,” he says to the Corinthians, “am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?”³ Sometimes the charges against him are of the most personal sort, and provoke retorts as bitter as themselves. “His letters say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” “Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” “Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am

¹ Gal. iii. 1, v. 1, 2.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 1.

² R. xiv. 14.

I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more."¹

These local conflicts form no part of the narrative in Acts. The single discussion at Jerusalem which has just been described was enough, according to this authority, to clear the air of strife, and from that moment the movements of Paul and James, of Peter and Barnabas were in perfect harmony. Peter himself in fact, no less than Philip, had opened the way for Paul's apostleship to the heathen. Paul during his wide travels according to Acts turned again and again to Jerusalem to bring alms or hold counsel with the chiefs, and showed himself almost as anxious as Peter to adapt himself to those who cherished an old-fashioned reverence for the law.² Though this may be too amiable a picture, in view of Paul's plain statements, we must not discredit unduly the trustworthiness of Acts. Though an anonymous document, as we have seen,

¹ 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 13, 14, 22, 23; also Phil. iii. 2, 18, 19.

² A. viii. ix. 32-xi. 18; xi. 30, xv. 2, xviii. 21, xix. 21, xxi. 17-26.

of wholly uncertain origin and age,¹ it yet gives us frankly such current traditions of the second century as could be recovered by a painstaking investigator, who got hold at least of one first-hand authority.² That he did his best to bring these refractory traditions into accord, with an overzealous anxiety for the harmony of the church, is only saying that he was, after his fashion, an ecclesiastical historian, with the instincts of his calling. Nor does it appear that any of Paul's epistles had ever crossed his vision to disturb his naïve assurance that the early hours of the church must needs have been pervaded by the spirit of saintly charity.³

¹ See p. 2.

² The so-called "we-passages," beginning with A. xvi. 10 and reappearing in chaps. xvii. xx. xxi. xxvii. xxviii. Nothing could be more characteristic of the method by which this book was edited than the wholly incidental manner in which these fragments are introduced. The reader is left to discover for himself, by the change of personal pronouns, that he is not reading the language of the compiler. Among the various guesses as to the original author are: Timothy, Clemens Romanus, Barnabas, Luke. Where all is conjecture Luke is as probable as any.

³ The first known collection of Paul's Epistles, preserved for us by Tertullian, is that of Marcion, about A. D. 150. It omits 1, 2 Tim., Titus, Hebrews, and calls Ephesians the

On all critical grounds his narrative is to be accepted as the only historic picture of those days which later generations had preserved, to be balanced by Paul's personal reminiscences where he gives them, but as affording the necessary background for his career, and as correcting at times the one-sided impression left by his letters alone.

Out of twenty-eight chapters in this book, sixteen are devoted by the narrator to Paul; showing how greatly at that early date, Paul's work, as propagandist of the faith, had overshadowed that of the earlier apostles. There are strange gaps in the

"Epistle to the Laodiceans." (Tertullian; adv. Marcion, i.-v.) A later list, about 160 or 170, gives all but Hebrews. (Muratori Fragment.) Among the earlier writers, Clem. Romanus mentions one of the Epistles to the Corinthians; Polycarp seems in one or two passages to have Romans and 1 Timothy in mind; Barnabas possibly had seen 1 Corinthians; the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" may have known 1 Thess.; 2 Clement speaks of "Books & Apostles"; Justin possibly knows Romans, Galatians, 2 Corinthians. As the allusions in these writers are only to single epistles at best, and Paul's name is only once mentioned, the natural inference is that the several letters circulated for a long time only in the regions to which they were addressed, not being collected before the middle of the second century. For the opposite view, see Zahn, *Kanon-Geschichte*, i. 811, etc. Jülicher, *Einl.*; Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, ii. 42 n.; and most of the other commentators.

record. The author knows little of Paul's ministry in Galatia, which to Paul was so important;¹ nor much of that in Rome;² nor of certain visits to Corinth, referred to in the epistles;³ while, as we have seen, he quite overlooked the long interval between Paul's conversion and his active entrance upon his ministry. Possibly, by the time when this sketch was drawn, Paul's traces in some of these regions had already been

¹ A. xvi. 6, xviii. 23. These brief allusions to Galatia as compared with the detailed accounts of Corinth, Ephesus, Pisidia and other less important places, have led many critics to assume that Paul means by Galatia the Roman Province, formed by Augustus B. C. 25, rather than the geographical district shown on our maps. As Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Paphlagonia were included in the Province, the "churches of Galatia" (Gal. i. 2) may be made to refer to those mentioned A. xiii. xiv. Paul, it is urged, used provincial names in other places (Gal. i. 21; 2 Cor. i. 8, ix. 2, xi. 10), therefore why not here? But the names of provinces must have come into vogue less rapidly in some places than in others, and, as the author of Acts, coupling Galatia with Phrygia, evidently had the geographical district in view, it is more natural to suppose that he knew little of Paul's relations with Galatia and therefore said little. Comp. Hausrath, *N. Test. Times*, iii. 146 f.; Weizsäcker, *Apos. Age*, i. 232; Pfeiderer, *Urch.* i. 135; Steck, *Galaterbrief*, 40; all of whom think that the Province is meant.

² A. xxviii. 17-31.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 14, xiii. 1 show that Paul, at that time, had been twice in Corinth. Acts knows of only one visit (xviii. 1-18), xx. 2 may refer to Corinth, though the writer seems to have no exact information on the point.

obliterated. Many fruitless seeds must have been planted in those days of experiment, and the hostility to which he so bitterly refers, may have been in some cases only too successful in causing his name to be forgotten.¹ Our historian could give us at best such records as came to his hands.

Taking now Paul's epistles to guide us, we find ourselves plunged at once into the problems and controversies which beset the early church. These familiar letters are our best historic evidence of the primitive phases of our Christian faith. It is interesting to see what they were. One of the earliest of these letters is, probably, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, written apparently from Corinth, just after his arrival there on his first visit.² His stay at Thessalonica

¹ "The seven churches in Asia," mentioned in Revelation (i. 11, ii. iii.) are all in the region about Ephesus where Paul worked so long, and we may suppose them to have arisen under his influence. The church at Ephesus was certainly his. Yet this picture of them, towards the end of the century (about A. D. 90) shows Paul as violently opposed in those churches, or quite forgotten. Comp. Weizsäcker, ii, 165, 200; Hausrath, iv. 257.

² 1 Th. iii. 6; A. xviii. 5. It should be said that the chronological arrangement of the Epistles is a matter of con-

must have been much longer than is indicated by the few hasty verses in Acts,¹ as it had brought the Apostle and his followers into the most intimate relations, which he recalls in his letter in terms of deepest affection. At the same time he is much concerned lest they should have misunderstood his teachings. He had spoken to them freely of the great impending crisis, for which all must be prepared, making this apparently the main topic of his discourse. He had begged them to abandon their idolatries, and to "wait for the Son of God from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." What else, indeed, could preoccupy the preacher's mind, if the end of the world, awaited for ages, was really close at hand, to be witnessed by them all?² But he finds that his hearers had taken him too literally. Perhaps he feels now, as their

jecture, and has to be determined by these slight and often conflicting allusions. The final order of the Canon seems to have gone on the principle of putting the big ones first, and the little ones afterwards.

¹ A. xvii. 1-10.

² 1 Th. i. 10, ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 16, 17, v. 2, 23.

eager questions reach him in Corinth, that he had himself spoken too positively, awakening expectations which could not be met, or leading them to suppose that he knew more of those mystic events than he actually did. In any case, judging from the tenor of his epistle, they had allowed the one absorbing thought to drive all worldly wisdom from their minds. They could not get away from the apostle's vivid pictures. They insisted upon knowing precisely when and how.¹ They let daily work lie idle while they awaited with folded hands the fearful catastrophe. Such is the impression made upon us, at this long distance, by the tone of the First Thessalonians. Paul has to remind them that neither he nor any one knows the exact hour. The great day of the Lord, predicted by the Prophets, was surely at hand during that very generation; but it would come "as a thief in the night," at the moment when they felt themselves most secure.² Had our Gospels been before

¹ 1 Th. v. 1, 2.

² 1 Th. v. 1-3; Joel ii. 1-11; Is. xiii. 9-13.

him, or had he been more familiar with the words of the living Jesus, he might well have drawn freely from those sources;¹ as it is, his immediate communications from above are all that the hour needs. Let them be ready for the awful moment; let them watch and be sober. But let them at the same time go on quietly with their daily affairs, not exposing themselves to comment by their idleness, nor coming upon others for their support. It was the very time to practise the saintly virtues, never more in place than as this earthly existence was drawing to its close, of purity, honesty, and brotherly love.²

But graver questions were involved in this singular situation; questions which only fanaticism could raise in these days, but which then seemed of crucial significance. If those living at the Messiah's coming were to be received at once into his kingdom, what would be the fate of friends who had died meantime, and who, according to Jewish belief, were awaiting in their graves the

¹ Mt. iv. 17, xvi. 28, xxiv. 3-44.

² 1 Th. iv. 2-12.

final resurrection? Were the living to be more fortunate than the dead, and to enjoy the blessings of God's kingdom without those they loved? ¹ Paul is ready with his answer, having indeed received special revelation from the Lord to allay such doubts.² The living will have no precedence over those who have died in the faith; all will enter the kingdom with the Lord himself. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:³ and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."⁴

No passage in Old Testament or New

¹ 1 Th. iv. 13.

² 1 Th. iv. 15. The "word of the Lord" here referred to suggests no known precept of Jesus, nor is it easy for us to imagine him giving such directions, if indeed his vision of the future corresponded with that of Paul. We may assume then that this is one of the personal revelations from above to which Paul owes so many of his beliefs.

³ According to the rabbis, there were seven trumps. Weber, *Jüd. Theologie*, 369; 1 Cor. xv. 52.

⁴ 1 Th. iv. 16, 17.

gives a more pronounced expression than this of the ideas current at that time, or the shape which they took in the mind of an intelligent believer. The details of this solemn event, such as the meeting-place in the air, were differently conceived by different thinkers, and Paul's own language on these points, as we shall see, was not always consistent with itself. We are not dealing here with official doctrines, rabbinical or otherwise, but rather with the dreams of devout souls; but it is clear that the purely spiritual or bodiless realm which in some form is present to our imaginations to-day, had no place in the speculations of those primitive days. We must not, of course, hold their phrases down to the barest literalism, or deny them the privilege of figurative conceptions of the future; but it is difficult to find sheer symbolism in such terms as, — "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"; "that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom"; "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven"; "He

must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”¹ The life of the early church, or Paul’s part in shaping it, will be quite misconceived until we allow full force to this imposing expectation.

Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians, written some years later,² shows that the excitement in this little community over the Messiah’s coming, had by no means abated. He reassures them in their doubts, and draws in lurid colors the character of that event and the terrible vengeance to be visited upon those who reject the Messiah, and who are causing such distress to his followers. He promises them repose from all

¹ Mt. xix. 28, xxiv. 30; L. xxii. 30; 1 Cor. xv. 25.

² Probably in Corinth. A. xviii. 11. Much doubt has been thrown upon the genuineness of 2 Th., owing chiefly to the supposed historical allusions in the second chapter. The passage, however, is open to so many interpretations, and is of so absolutely enigmatic a character, that it is impossible to base positive results upon it. The apocalyptic expectations here depicted, however startling, are no more extraordinary than in our Gospels, and have to be accepted as part of the popular belief of the hour. In any case we must determine the genuineness of Paul’s writings on independent historic grounds. The objections to 2 Th. seem hardly strong enough to condemn it. For the opposite view, see Holtzmann, *Hand-Comm.* ii. 9–13; Weizsäcker, i. 295–8; Hausrath, iii. 215; Pfeiderer, *Urch.* i. 95–100.

these trials, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, . . . when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe."¹ But they must not be misled by their teachers, or by false letters as from him. He reminds them that the Messiah could not appear till strange events, long foretold, had prepared the way; until a great apostasy from Christ's fold should occur, and the Antichrist should be revealed; "the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." They must remember that the writer had discoursed of all these things while he was yet with them. The Wicked One was already mysteriously at

¹ 2 Th. i. 7-10.

work, but as mysteriously opposed, for the greater confusion of Satan and his followers. Let but that hindrance be removed (they well knew what it was), and the Wicked would stand forth revealed, "whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."¹

These dark sayings can no longer be made clear. Possibly, in speaking of the "man of sin," Paul had simply in mind the popular expectation of a great ruler who must appear at the head of the world's powers before those powers could be finally overcome.² The memory of Antiochus Epiphanes and his great sacrilege,³ haunted the Jewish imagination for generations, and colored all their dreams of future woe.

¹ 2 Th. ii. 1-8.

² Dan. vii. 23-25, viii. 19-27, xi. 36-45 were largely the source of these expectations. The "fourth kingdom" according to the rabbis was godless Rome, which must be destroyed before Messiah could come. In the days of Messiah a mighty ruler, Armilus, would be over the kingdoms of the world, to oppose Messiah (Weber, § 81-1). The "Wicked" (ii. 8), or Antichrist, has been understood, at different epochs, to be Mahomet, Napoleon, the Pope, Luther.

³ 1 Macc. i. 21, 54; 2 Macc. vi. 2-6.

Caligula, whose reign was just over, had threatened a similar affront to the nation, by ordering his statue to be erected in their temple, thus renewing the old terror.¹ Possibly Nero (here as in the Book of Revelation) is the antichrist, whose prophesied reappearance after his death filled Rome in those days with dismay, and found its echo in these distant provinces.² So great are the straits of the commentators in deciphering this occult passage, that the expression "what withholdeth" has been supposed to be a play upon the name of the emperor Claudius, whose reign was in some unknown way postponing the impending catastrophe.³ But all conjecture is idle here. Many apocalypses are known to have circulated in those hours, depicting the days of Christ and his antichrist; and the exalted language of this chapter is more than likely to have been drawn directly from one of those

¹ Joseph. Antiquit. xviii. 8, 2; Jew. War, ii. 10; Sueton. Caligula, 22, 33; Philo, de Legat. 29-43; Tacitus, Hist. v. 9.

² Tacitus, Hist. ii. 8, 9; Suetonius, Nero, 57.

³ 2 Th. ii. 6; Hitzig, Geschichte Isr. 583; Hausrath, iii. 216 n.; Claudit (Claudius) = he withholds.

inflammatory writings. Ample room is left for conjecture as to the writer's exact meaning; for us, the main interest of the passage lies in the picture which it gives of the overwrought expectations rife in the opening hours of Christianity, and the singular devices resorted to to allay the excitement. The closing chapters of the Synoptic Gospels, written much later than this epistle, show how long it was before the Christian community freed itself from the incubus of these morbid terrors.¹

The questions which the apostle had to consider were not all of so grave a character. The every-day affairs of his little gatherings had to be met by him, and in these matters he reveals another side of his nature. Nowhere does he appear more engaging than in his words of affection towards those who had befriended him, or in his practical solution of their knotty problems; nowhere more impressive than when serious cases arise and he assumes the conscious authority of a divinely-appointed leader. His first letter to the

¹ Mt. xxiv.

Corinthians is richer in such details than any other, and may be taken as a picture of his whole ministry. It is instructive to see at how primitive a point of morals and of religious consciousness the Christian apostle had to begin.

According to Acts Paul had spent a year and a half in Corinth;¹ and for two or three years afterwards he seems to have carried on a busy correspondence with them, as their abounding vitality brought them into unexpected situations where a guiding hand was greatly needed. Of several letters alluded to by Paul two remain; the first, which we have now in mind, having been written probably from Ephesus about A. D. 57.²

¹ A. xviii. 1, 11. Our author shows little acquaintance with the state of affairs in Corinth as revealed in 1 and 2 Cor.

² 1 Cor. v. 9 shows that a lost letter preceded that epistle. 2 Cor. ii. 3, 4, vii. 8 can be best understood as referring to still another, intervening between the two which have been preserved. Some writers consider 2 Cor. x-xiii. part of this third letter. In any case the two existing epistles represent four which Paul seems to have addressed to the Corinthians. Both epistles have been questioned by modern critics, and many interesting points made against them (Steck, Galaterbrief), but none of Paul's letters has more claims upon our acceptance, and if all are given up, Paul himself becomes an unknown figure in history. Holtz. ii. 47; Bacon, Story of St. Paul, 266.

In the short interval since his departure, serious dissensions had arisen among them, the rumor of which had evidently prompted this epistle. In fact the church had fallen already into four distinct parties, with the sectarian instinct keenly alive in them all. It is not necessary to suppose that the older apostles had any hand in this strife, so soon after the harmonious result of the Jerusalem conference; at the same time they could hardly be expected to have cared much for Paul's highly idealized conception of the Messiah, even if they understood it at all; and their followers would be quick to emphasize such differences if they did not. In any case we find parties enrolled face to face in Corinth under the names of four different leaders. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."¹ The Paul and Peter parties, representing the old doctrines and the new, we can easily understand; but what were the others? Paul does not describe them. We only know, so

¹ 1 Cor. i. 12.

far as Apollos is concerned, that he was an Alexandrian Jew, who had received his messianic instruction, according to Acts, from disciples of John the Baptist, and had reached Corinth from Ephesus soon after Paul left.¹ His reputation had long survived in those parts as "an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures." What the Alexandrian fashion of Scripture interpretation was we know very well ; and if he brought from those schools a training in Greek rhetoric or philosophy also, it is not strange that the Corinthians were attracted by his eloquence, as compared with Paul's more halting speech,² and were ready to accept him as the true expositor of the new faith. His personal relations with Paul were always friendly,³ but the followers of great men are wont to become more impassioned partisans than their masters, and so the admirers of Apollos set themselves against the followers of Paul. Possibly his eloquence alone captivated them ; possibly his Alexandrian mysticism appealed

¹ A. xviii. 24-28.

² 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, xvi. 12.

³ 2 Cor. x. 10.

more strongly to them than Paul's more scholastic discourse. All that we know of the matter is confined to these few verses. The fourth party alluded to is less easy to define, being known to us only as calling themselves by the name of "Christ." Various guesses have been made as to their identity; we can only say that the pleasantest to believe, and on the whole the most natural, is that the name was a simple protest against those who would claim any leader less exalted than Christ himself.¹

Against these incipient schisms, Paul protests with much warmth. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"²

¹ The many conjectures as to the exact character of the Christ-party throw little light on the question. One critic thinks them a Jewish party impatient of the claims of Peter, and attaching themselves rather to James as coming nearest to Christ. Another considers them a philosophical offshoot from the original disciples. One might infer from the passage that to the bewildered ears of the Corinthians, strangers to the Christian gospel, the names of Peter, Paul, Apollos, Christ sounded like so many rival claimants to the messiahship. Comp. Meyer, *Kritisch exeget. Commentar.* on i. 12; Weizs. i. 329, 330.

² 1 Cor. i. 13.

From what follows, we infer that it was the disciples of Apollos who were making themselves most conspicuous at that juncture, and whom therefore Paul had chiefly in mind. We have only to imagine that party vaunting ostentatiously the superior wisdom or philosophy of their favorite leader, and we can understand the ardor of his reproofs. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."¹ For the moment he is ready to insist that this message of the cross alone is enough to convert the world. The wisdom of man has had its day. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." He

¹ 1 Cor. i. 17, 18.

glories even in the fact that his gospel has reached only the lowly of the earth. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."¹ If Paul were to be held down to the letter of every passing mood, we should have to regard him as breaking, at the outset, with the world's literature and thought to offer his gospel to the humblest classes alone. We shall find later that he has other moods.

A church like that of the Corinthians must have been of mingled character, and cases of evil conduct speedily arose demanding rigorous discipline. In Corinth a stepson had married his father's widow,² an abhorrent precedent dangerous to a young community. Paul directs the Corinthians

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20, 21, 26, 27.

² 1 Cor. v. 1. So it is possible to understand this verse ; though open of course to a worse construction.

to act in this case with the utmost severity, and rebukes them for not ridding themselves at once of such an offender. Let them excommunicate the sinner, delivering him into the hands of Satan for punishment or even death. Through the suffering or destruction of the body, the spirit might be saved. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together my spirit being with you, — deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."¹ That this severe counsel was acted upon we have no proof. Indeed, if a passage in a later epistle refers to the present case, we may conclude that the Corinthians shrunk from so rigorous a procedure, and that the apostle himself relented in the end, and was

¹ 1 Cor. v. 2-5. The meaning of this obscure passage seems to be that the Corinthians, though empowered to excommunicate the offender, had hesitated to do so. Paul reprimands them for this, and begs them to proceed in the name of Jesus, as though he (Paul) were with them in person, and hand the sinner over to Satan. A similar case is recorded in Acts, where the offender suffered the extreme penalty (A. v. 1-10). The excommunication of the later Christian church seems like a faded counterpart of this awful power. Gal. vi. 1 indicates that Paul sometimes acted in a different spirit.

satisfied with moral reproof.¹ But none the less clear is his conception of the extraordinary power with which the church of Christ and its apostles were armed. In the same spirit, referring to advice given in a previous letter, he forbids the Corinthians to have any intercourse whatever with fornicators or other gross offenders. "Now I write unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." Where moral contamination was concerned, he would maintain all the ancient exclusiveness, and the uncompromising judgments of the ancient law. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."²

The Jews, as we know, had always shrunk from intercourse with the Gentiles. The very contact with idolaters was abhorrent to them, still more the yoke of conquest on the

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 9, vii. 12. The present case may have been here in Paul's mind, though of this we cannot be sure.

² 1 Cor. v. 9-13. Possibly Paul has Deut. xvii. 7 in mind.

necks of the chosen people. While regarding all civil authority as in a sense divine, and consenting therefore to pay tribute, they had held aloof so far as possible from Roman courts, trying to settle their quarrels by their own laws, and their own tribunals.¹ The Corinthians had evidently been too lax in these matters, and Paul was aroused to unwonted indignation. According to current ideas, members of the messianic community were by and by, on the appearance of the Messiah, to sit in judgment over the entire world; indeed over angels as well as men.² "Dare any of you," he says, "having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"³

¹ Weber, § 19. 2.

² Mt. xix. 28; Rev. xv. 4; Wis. Sol. iii. 8. Angels, who were beings of various grades and shades, came under the same general world-judgment.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 1-3. "Saint" is Paul's term for a member of the messianic community, as set apart for religious service. Also A. ix. 13, 32, 41, xxvi. 10; Weizs. i. 43; Harnack, *Ausbreitung*,

Such being your future dignity, he continues, can you allow these unbelievers to call you before their tribunals? "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?" "Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"¹ Paul was far from counselling resistance to the civil powers, or legislating for later generations, yet it is clear that the spiritual tribunals of after ages, assuming that the apostle had their needs in mind, might find ample warrant here for all their assumptions.

It is plain that Paul's dealings with these moral questions exposed him to many misconceptions. When he gloried in his freedom from the Jewish law, or told his Greek converts that the waters of baptism had washed them from their sins, some of them seem to have regarded this as full license to indulge their natural propensities. His language

289. Paul has ample Old Testament authority here. Ex. xix. 6; Dan. vii. 18, 21, 22.

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 4-8. This passage becomes more intelligible if verse 4 is read as a question. Paul might have found apt quotations here in the words of Jesus, had he been more familiar with his precepts. Mt. v. 39; Weizs. ii. 312, 380.

towards the close of this same chapter shows how dangerous these misapprehensions were. "All things," he says, "are indeed lawful to me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."¹ Especially was this true of the fleshly lusts which are here in question. As the body, in Paul's view, was to have its essential part in the resurrection, sins against the body were sins against God as truly as those against the soul. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? . . . Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you? . . . Therefore glorify God in your body."²

Much trouble arose through the disciples' intercourse with the outer world, especially in the question of intermarriage. For some of these cases Paul could rely upon direct injunctions from the Lord, for others he trusted to his native sagacity, which seldom failed him.³ What should be the rule if a

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 11, 12.

³ 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25.

² 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

wife became a believer without the husband, or the husband without the wife? Were they to separate? "No," was his counsel, as one might bring the other into the faith. "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" But if separation became necessary, let her not think further of marriage.¹ The whole question of marriage evidently assumed new significance under the apprehension of the speedy end of the world. "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none . . . and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."² Paul's own practice was of the strictest in these matters, but he refrained from urging it upon all, though regarding celibacy under existing circumstances as the best estate.³ His care-

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10-16.

² 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

³ 1 Cor. vii. 1, 8, 38. These passages are commonly understood as meaning that Paul was unmarried. But it is equally easy to suppose that on becoming a disciple of Jesus, he had withdrawn from the family life into which, like a good Jew,

fully guarded and fluctuating advice reveals the delicacy of the situation, and the difficulty, even for a divinely-appointed leader, true to the highest ideals, to lay down absolute decrees. In fact his counsel ends very much where it began. Let all remain in the position where their conversion found them. "As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches. Is any one called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any one called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. . . Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."¹ Even the slave should turn his servitude to account in the Lord's service, rather than risk the dangers of unlicensed freedom. No doubt there were households in Corinth where the question was a serious one. "Thou wast called as a slave, but let not that concern you. Even if thou mayest be

especially if member of the Sanhedrin, he had entered. Perhaps his wife had died. Comp. ix. 5.

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 17-20.

made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord being a slave is the Lord's freeman : likewise also he that is called being free is Christ's servant."¹ All are servants in any case, being bought with a price. "Ye are bought with a price ; be not ye the servants of men." The whole chapter is a remarkable one ; Paul is so plainly holding the balance even between his instincts of absolute self-abnegation in the presence of momentous issues, and the practical necessities of a restive community. In nearly all the chapters of this epistle we feel how different were the situations which Paul had to face from any which exist among us to-day. As far as the east is from the west, so far were the ethical or spiritual problems of the Corinthians removed from ours. The moral precepts with which the epistle is so full, though of the utmost importance then, we should find it difficult to put in practical application among ourselves. There are some rare and beautiful exceptions, as we shall find, but in general the apostle is addressing,

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 21-24.

as he must, the pressing needs of the hour, when time was short, and the "fashion of this world was passing away."

Another burning question, which the preacher of to-day certainly is not called upon to answer, was that of purchasing at the shambles meats which had been offered to idols, the only meat cheap enough for the poor man to buy. This was evidently a point on which many boasted of their superior enlightenment, which exempted them from obeying the old Jewish precept concerning such food.¹ Paul acknowledges that they are right in theory, but that the question is one to call for great charity of judgment. "Knowledge puffeth up," he reminds them, "but charity edifieth." "As concerning the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is but one

¹ Ex. xxxiv. 14, 15.

God the Father, of whom are all things and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”¹ But this fine distinction between the heavenly beings whom the Heathen called gods, and the equally numerous heavenly beings whom the Christians called angels, was hard for the common mind to grasp. All could not rise to this esoteric knowledge, and their tender consciences must be respected. “Howbeit there is not in every mind that knowledge : for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol ; and their conscience being weak is defiled.”² The Christians of that day seem to have had the pleasant habit of feasting with their Pagan friends in their temples, priding themselves apparently that they were thus bringing their weaker brethren up to the mark of eating the forbidden meats ; but leading them instead into fatal moral indifference. “For if any man see thee that hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 1-6.

² 1 Cor. viii. 7.

make him bold to eat those things which are offered to idols ; and through thy knowledge the weak brother shall perish, for whom Christ died ? ” Better give up flesh entirely than so to beguile tender consciences. “ Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”¹

Even such paltry matters as his pecuniary support assume gravity in this very confidential letter. Without the exact circumstances to guide us his grievance is not quite clear, but apparently his opponents had stooped to the insinuation that Paul was no real apostle as Peter was, and therefore had no claim upon the churches for support ; as indeed he had acknowledged by working with his own hands. Paul insists upon his equal rights with the earlier disciples ; showing much warmth in his defence, and introducing the matter with great abruptness. Even though he had not accompanied the Master in his earthly life, yet he had seen him in vision, he declares, and could claim

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 10-13.

therefore the same knowledge and authority as they. "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ the Lord? are ye not my work in the Lord? . . . Have we not power to eat and drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, as wife, as well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only, and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"¹ If he had refused to avail himself of his right, it was only that he might seek his sole reward in the Gospel which he preached. As is so often the case, the lesser trials of his calling were the ones which caused him the keenest

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 1-6, 11. Comp. xv. 8, 9. The Catholic translation of v. 5 is "Have we not power to lead about a woman, a sister"; but the common Greek usage demands clearly the meaning "wife." (M. vi. 18 and other passages.) The expression "sister as wife" or "sister-wife" is peculiar to this passage, and unless it means simply that the apostles were accompanied by their wives in travelling, it refers to some custom among them otherwise unknown. As Paul includes himself in the same category with the other disciples, it would seem that if they were married he was also. Comp. Holtzmann on vii. 40; Weizs. ii. 371, 2; Wernle, *Beginnings of Chris.* i. 347.

suffering, and his manly attitude throws a redeeming light upon these sordid disputes. "If others be partakers of this power over you, have not we still more? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. . . . Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. . . . What is my reward then? Verily that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."¹

Another question, even more trivial to our modern tastes, was the source of angry controversy, and Paul was led to devote a serious passage to it: Should women appear in religious gatherings with covered or uncovered head? Eastern customs in these matters have always been more scrupulous than our own, and it was a perilous moment when the Jewish worshipper found himself suddenly confronted with the greater license of the Greeks in the mingling of the sexes.

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 12-18.

As a rule there were no distinctions of rank among the early Christians, and Paul had expressed himself, in another connection, quite positively on this point: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."¹ But he could not wholly surrender his inherited instincts. He regarded the eastern custom as based upon divine appointment. Did not the Scriptures show that woman was derived from man, and was created as a helpmeet for him? As God is above Christ, and Christ above any man, so is man above the woman. Man is the immediate image and glory of God, woman the glory of the man. Now man's uncovered head is the token of his supremacy.² Woman must appear with covered head as inferior to man. If uncovered at all, it might quite as well be shaven entirely; a token of shame. "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophe-

¹ Gal. iii. 28.

² 1 Cor. xi. 3, 7-9.

sieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head : for that is even all one as if she were shaven.”¹ In fact, to Paul’s thought, nature herself determined this question ; as they could see for themselves how uncomely it was for a woman to pray unto God uncovered, as much so as for a man to wear long hair. “ Judge for yourselves : is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered ? Doth not nature itself teach you that if a man hath long hair, it is a shame unto him ? but if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her : for her hair is given her for a covering.” In any case, concludes Paul, quite peremptorily, however much you may discuss the matter the uncovered head is not the custom in our churches. “ If any one seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”² Nowhere is Paul more explicit than on this

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 4-6. The argument here is not clear, even if we get at the exact translation. “ Head ” (4) may refer to man’s own head or to Christ as his “ head ” (3). And why man’s uncovered head is a token of supremacy, does not appear ; it is quite as easy to argue the other way. As to the angels, the ancient scripture Gen. vi. 2 may have been before Paul’s mind.

² 1 Cor. xi. 13-16.

point. In another place he imposes absolute silence upon women in holy places. "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."¹

Much more serious was the laxity of the Corinthians in their observance of the Lord's Supper. This rite was still in its infancy. On parting from his disciples at their last passover, Jesus had given a new significance to the paschal bread and cup which would naturally recur to them whenever they met together at that annual festival. Paul's allusions in this epistle are our first evidence that this ceremonial had perpetuated itself among the disciples.² By this time it seems to have detached itself from the passover, and to have become a distinct feast. Paul

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

² 1 Cor. xi. 23. Paul seems to claim this as one of his special revelations from the Lord. But in any case such a revelation could not have created the historic facts, or have gone into verbal details; it could only have declared the significance of a rite which was becoming much abused.

gives an extraordinary picture of the character it had assumed. It was at that time a common meal, to which all who came were expected to contribute according to their means, that all might enjoy together the sacred feast. As the poor generally predominated, the sentiment of charity was an important element in the rite, and unfortunately this feature, which should have given it special beauty, had brought disgrace upon the whole observance. Far from remembering the brotherly character of the meal, the Corinthians had turned it into a scene of gluttony and drunkenness, in which the poor were left to shift as they could. "In eating every one snatches before another his own supper; and one is hungry and another drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have nothing? What shall I say unto you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."¹

Paul tries to impress upon them the sacred character of the feast which they were de-

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22.

grading. He recalls the closing hours of the Master's life, and reminds them of the solemn words with which he had broken the bread, and passed the wine. Those words were soon enough to become a fixed formula; here they are quoted simply to call back to memory a sacred hour. Paul tries to give higher meaning to the rite by reminding them of the pathetic incidents which they were forgetting. He finds mystic significance in the feast. It was held in view of the Master's return, and was to symbolize his death till he should appear.¹ The bread was no ordinary bread, the wine no common wine; to touch either irreverently was in the nature of sacrilege, bringing swift condemnation upon the offender. Paul points to the many cases of sickness and death in the congregation as instances of divine pun-

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 23-26. The varying form in which these words are repeated in the Synoptics, together with the fact that the Fourth Gospel knows nothing of the rite whatever, are evidence against the early adoption of a fixed or liturgical formula. Mt. xxvi. 26-29; M. xiv. 22-25; L. xxii. 17-20. The Fourth Gospel has no paschal feast whatever, and substitutes for the bread and wine the touching incident of the washing of the disciples' feet. J. xiii. 1-17.

ishment for that sacrilege. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."¹ That the Lord's Supper survived these primitive abuses, and became afterwards an established institution, corresponding with the mystic rites of contemporary religions, we know; we stand here at its beginnings, and the apostle's vigorous warnings show us the perils through which he had to guide its early observance. He concludes his rebukes: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."²

Their church gatherings were exposed to still other abuses, possible only in formative hours, which give telltale evidence of the hard conditions with which the early missionary had to deal. On entering the Christian communion, the convert was supposed to

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

² 1 Cor. xi. 33, 34.

receive certain supernatural endowments which it is difficult to characterize exactly, but which were called the gifts of the Spirit. This was regarded perhaps as the fulfilment of the Scripture prophecies of marvels to accompany the great day of the Lord. "And it shall come to pass . . . that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."¹ The Spirit, it was claimed, manifested its power in various ways ; in healings, in miracles, in prophecy, in inspired wisdom, or in the gift of tongues. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; to another faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing ; . . . to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another the discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another

¹ A. ii. 17-18, 38. From A. viii. 15-17, x. 44-48, xix. 2-6, we infer that the bestowal of the Holy Ghost was quite independent of baptism, though generally connected with it. Pfeid. Paulinismus, 205, 6; Joel ii. 28.

the interpretation of tongues.”¹ To Paul all this was a sublime token of actual fellowship with Christ; but to the heathen convert, new to these ideals, and anxious to enter upon the full possession of such unusual gifts, it was attended by strange consequences.

In Corinth lively disputes had arisen over the relative importance of these endowments; and three of the longest chapters of our epistle are devoted to the pacification of these disputes. Unfortunately the least valuable of the talents in Paul’s eyes, the so-called gift of tongues, was prized by the Corinthians as the highest of all, and as giving its possessor great preëminence over his fellows. This remarkable phenomenon has no counterpart whatever in our modern religious customs, unless it be in the emotional outbursts of our revivalists, or of the untutored converts of our southern states. The familiar description in Acts of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, would lead one to suppose the gift of tongues to be the power to speak foreign languages, as the nar-

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 8-11.

rator evidently understood it himself;¹ but Paul's account, much earlier, gives it quite a different character, and we must picture it to ourselves as best we can from his words. It would seem that the immediate communion with God vouchsafed to the Christian believer could not be carried on by common speech; a new form of language was granted therefore, unintelligible to others, but expressive of profound spiritual mysteries. "He that speaketh with tongues speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Unlike prophecy, which was for instruction or exhortation, this was between the soul and God; a divine speech, resembling perhaps the tongues of angels.² It seems to have been a form of soliloquy, used mainly in prayer, and lifting the rapt worshipper into unknown realms, where the usual mental processes count for little. "If I pray with tongues, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."³ At times

¹ A. ii. 1-13.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 14.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 2-4, xiii. 1.

it consisted of purely inarticulate sounds, impressing the faithful as a supreme token of inspiration, but to the unbeliever resembling the ravings of insanity. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?"¹ To bring it within bounds a special order of interpreters had to be employed, to make these ravings intelligible, or at least enable the hearers, when the right moment came, to say "Amen."² Paul holds this power of mystic speech in high esteem, claiming it for himself as part of his apostolic endowment; but when he learned into what abuses it had led the Corinthians, he comments upon it in caustic vein. It is through his satirical criticisms that we get our knowledge of the thing itself. "Even things without life," he remarks, "giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? . . . So likewise ye, except ye utter

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 15-17, 27, 28.

by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. . . . There are many dialects in the world, and none of them without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian unto me.”¹ While prizing for himself this form of occult utterance, he admits that the power of calm intelligible speech is better still. “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words with tongues.”²

To remedy the evil he lays down certain practical directions. When they gathered for worship, some with psalms some with discourses to deliver, they should speak in orderly fashion. If any one proposed to speak with tongues, he should be limited to two or at most three utterances, while some one should always be by to interpret.

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 7-11.

² 1 Cor. xiv. 18, 19.

Otherwise it was better in public assemblies to say nothing. "If any man speak in tongues let it be by two or at most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God."¹ Thus their varied acquirements, instead of breeding vanity and jealousies, would bind the Christian body in a more perfect love. "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I you a more excellent way."² It was in this connection that Paul was led into the noble pæan to charity which lends radiance to the epistle, and quite repays us for the unedifying chapters in which it is imbedded.³

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 1-13.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 31.

CHAPTER III

JEW AND GENTILE

TO those who are interested in the development of human thought, religious or secular, nothing is more instructive than the growth of Christianity out of Judaism. Here, as in other cases, the separation was no sudden affair ; though the religious chronicler is apt to forget this. We find our first church annalist, author of the Acts, searching curiously for the exact hour of this momentous break. He is quite sure that he can put his finger upon the very time and place. It was at Antioch in Pisidia ; whither Paul and Barnabas went on landing in Asia Minor, entering the synagogue on the Sabbath day, to join in the services. After the courteous manner of the synagogues, the strangers were re-

quested by the rulers, if they had anything to say, to address the people, and Paul at once seized the opportunity. The Jews and proselytes present, we are told, listened at first with great concern ; but when on the following Sabbath the Jews saw the multitudes that were thronging in, they were "filled with envy," and proceeded to argue with the apostles ; in the language of our author to "contradict and blaspheme." "Then," our narrative continues, "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."¹ The blow was struck, we are to understand, and Christianity stood once for all apart from Judaism.

In Iconium, however, the very next place which the apostles visit, they enter the synagogue again, as naturally as before, meeting the same friendly reception. "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both to-

¹ A. xiii. 14-46.

gether into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.”¹ The apostles had evidently forgotten that they had rejected the Jews forever. Still later, as we are told by the unknown travelling-companion whom our chronicler quotes, when Paul came over into Macedonia and visited Philippi, he went on the Sabbath to a place by the river side, where the Jews met for prayer, and joined in the exercises as if he were still one of them.² This practice he continued from place to place, as if the synagogue was as much his home, and its ways as natural, as ever. “They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; and Paul as his manner was went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.”³ It was quite the same at Berea and at Athens.⁴ When he came to Corinth, and “reasoned in the

¹ A. xiv. 1.

² A. xvi. 12, 13. This is part of the journal of Paul's travelling-companion (see p. 2 n.).

³ A. xvii. 1-4.

⁴ A. xvii. 10-17.

synagogue every Sabbath " as usual, the Jews once more " blasphemed "; whereupon Paul strangely enough repeated almost the same words as at Antioch in Pisidia: " When they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads ; I am clean : from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. " None the less, when he reached Ephesus, so little did he feel himself estranged from the Jews, that " he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. " Indeed, when Paul reached Rome, at the very end of his recorded ministry, so far from avoiding his fellow-countrymen, his first act was to " call the chief of the Jews together, " and address them as though pleading for Israel itself. " And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of

the Romans. . . . For this cause have I called for you, . . . because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." Finally, when some accepted his gospel while others declined it, he dismissed them with the words of the Hebrew prophet: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and not perceive. . . . Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."¹

How are we to understand these startling contradictions? Did not Paul expect himself to be taken seriously in the first instance or in the last? Was it an empty threat on the part of this great preacher of a new faith? Or has it a much more natural solution? Is it not simply that our historian, writing after the Christian church had finally separated itself from the synagogue, felt himself bound to show just when and where

¹ A. xviii. 1-6, xix. 8, 9, xxviii, 17-28.

this great event occurred, and seized his opportunity wherever he could find it? With the naïveté of an early chronicler he rushed at one conclusion after another, and took no trouble, or felt no need, to harmonize his results. He set an example, followed too strictly by later ecclesiastical writers, of trying to fix a historic moment which did not exist. Let us once regard these several statements as simply the chronicler's view of what he thought must have happened, and the real course of events becomes clear. Paul and Barnabas found their natural audience from the beginning in the synagogue; preaching there in each case, as long as the people would listen, then going elsewhere. Their one aim was to awaken their hearers of whatever race to a belief in Christ, and win them for the coming kingdom. Driven from one synagogue, they turned to another, appealing to national instincts, and preaching always the "hope of Israel," but turning readily to foreign listeners as Jewish resistance proved invincible, or the Pagans brought readier ears or keener curios-

ity to the new gospel. Paul became apostle to the Gentiles, by virtue of having more to say to them than other apostles had, and being better able to meet them on their own grounds; still more because conceiving of his own faith as no longer a matter of legal precepts, but as carrying at its heart a world-wide mission. He saw more and more clearly that they were his most promising field, and acted accordingly; while never formally relinquishing the one field for the other, except where he came into rivalry with other workers.¹ To the second century writer, intent at every point upon supernatural agencies, so normal a procedure seemed quite too commonplace for these divine events; though his record itself points plainly, in its very inconsistencies, to this obvious explanation.

I do not forget that the Acts is nowadays considered an untrustworthy guide in these

¹ Gal. ii. 9; R. xv. 18-20. That others beside Paul worked among the heathen is probable enough in itself, and is indicated by passages like A. viii. 5, 14, 26-40, x., xi. Isaiah xlix. 6 and many prophetic passages must have acted on other souls as well as Paul's.

matters, and where in conflict with Paul's own letters as a prejudiced witness. The writer had his task, we are reminded; he was bound to conciliate the opposing claims of the two great leaders, and give to each his share in carrying the gospel to the Gentile world. Granting all this, however, as our chronicler shows no more bias than others of his class, and is honestly striving to tell a true story, he is fully entitled to be heard in those details which he alone has preserved. If there was bias on one side, no doubt there was a little on the other also; as the most honest autobiographer is liable to remember best the things favorable to himself. In the present case, however, it is not the Acts alone which puts the matter as I have stated it above. I have no point to prove, as between the two writers. Let Paul speak for himself. Carefully studied, it will be found that our two authorities do not materially contradict each other, in regard to Paul's relation to Jew and Gentile. That he came to be regarded, with good reason, as the Apostle to the Gentiles, there is no question. That

he was an unfaltering advocate of the larger truth when other leaders clung closely to their traditions, is equally clear. If the author of Acts does not know him as the Gentile apostle, the Christian world soon gave him this rank. In some instances he assumes that title himself, or his followers for him.¹ But to suppose that he ever limited himself to the Gentiles, or that he assumed from the beginning that they were to be his sole or special field, is to do as great violence to his own writings as to Acts. His most explicit statement is in his epistle to the Galatians, where he shows how he regarded his mission, at the time of writing that epistle. "It pleased God," he says, "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen."² In writing to the Thessalonians,

¹ R. xi. 13; Gal. ii. 2; Eph. iii. 1-7; Col. i. 25-27; 1 Tim. ii. 7; 2 Tim. i. 11.

² Gal. i. 15, 16. Nothing more can be drawn from these verses, as it seems to me, than that Paul at the time of writing to the Galatians, about A. D. 56, regarded his mission to the Gentiles as the special work to which God had called him; as Luther towards the end of his career might have claimed that

probably somewhat earlier, he made no such claim, and never passed out of the atmosphere of purely Jewish thought.¹ In this very letter to the Galatians he is as much a Jew as ever, and if one passage means what it seems, was charged with still preaching circumcision.² In his two Corinthian letters, he seems interested in Jews and Gentiles alike, and declares himself as good a Hebrew and Israelite as any of his foes.³ Even in Romans, latest perhaps of his longer epistles, he proclaimed himself more imperiously than ever an Israelite, claimed that to the Jews "were committed the oracles of God," and announced the divine purpose in admitting Gentiles to the kingdom to have been, that through their entrance "all Israel might be saved."⁴ In the latest writings ever ascribed to him, it is rarely possible to tell whether

God had separated him from his 'mother's womb to break the power of the papacy. For the opposite view of this passage, see Pfeid. Paulinismus, 3 ; Holz. on Gal. i. 16 ; Weizs. i. 83, 90-94 ; Bacon, 26, 7 ; and most others.

¹ I Th. 1, 9 and II. 14-16 show that Paul was addressing chiefly Gentiles, yet none of his letters is more Jewish in tone.

² Gal. v. 11.

³ 1 Cor. ix. 20, xii. 13 ; 2 Cor. xi. 22.

⁴ R. xi. 1, 25, 26.

he is addressing Greeks or Jews. To the Philippians he utters himself with great circumstantiality as "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee."¹ In Colossians there are evidently Jews among his readers, and he looks forward to the time when there shall be "neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision."² In Ephesians again, though addressing mainly Gentiles, and claiming to be minister to them by divine revelation, his chief concern is to bring both Jew and Gentile into one body.³ In all his arguments Paul expects his hearers to be perfectly familiar with the Jewish Scriptures, to be interested in the minutest points of rabbinical pedantry and to accept the prophets and the fathers as their own.⁴ So far as his own writings testify, he never went over to the Gentiles as his sole field, and never dreamed that his own race, as such, were not to have their prophesied place

¹ Phil. iii. 5.

² Col. ii. 11, 13, 16, iii. 11.

³ Eph. i. 13, ii. 11, iii. 3-8, ii. 14-19.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 1-4; Gal. iv. 21-31.

in the messianic joys. He was too true a Hebrew, and too good a patriot for that. He was content that the "middle wall of partition should be broken down," whether Jews dominated in the end or Gentiles. The value of his writings lies in revealing the gradual and unconscious processes by which ancient beliefs, when encountering a mind of deeper insights, widen out into larger ideals.¹

I am not concerned to prove Paul a good evolutionist. Far from that, his outlook on the future gave no space for prolonged processes of spiritual development. It was closely bounded by the coming era, due at any hour, when all historic races and faiths

¹ There can be no question that in certain moods Paul seemed ready to throw over the law entirely. (2 Cor. iii. 6-14; Gal. ii. 15-21, iii. 21-25.) No doubt many another Jew felt equally outraged by the sheer legalism of the schools and the exaltation of the Law into a sacred fetish. All the time, however, Paul regarded the law as spiritual; it was holy (R. vii, 12, 14) and the sole means of leading the world to Christ. Paul broke with the law, if at all, in the sense that he viewed it as reaching its fulfilment in the coming of Christ, and therefore no longer operative. His own answer to the charge of "making void the law," if R. iii. 29-31 is genuine, is emphatic enough. Comp. Hartmann, *Das relig. Bewusstsein d. Menschheit*, 546-557; Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, i. 292-5.

were to pass away. For the few years while the world remained, he was resolved that his gospel should reach all who would listen, and that the promises of the fathers should find their largest possible fulfilment. So far from being the first, as is sometimes claimed for Paul, to reveal the absolute antithesis between Judaism and Christianity,¹ he shows no consciousness of such antithesis, nor any growing sense of it. Rather the reverse. In his latest writings he is as little aware as in his earliest, that Christianity has broken forever from the mother faith. In every epistle he speaks as a Pharisee, expressing his new gospel to the end in the terms of the ancient faith, and finding room in that faith for his new interpretations of the divine scheme. For him, however it may seem to the modern eye, there was no disruption. Paul needs no vindication on these points. He did his part as no one else could have done it; and his part is an ineffaceable chapter of man's religious experience. I am only concerned to allow

¹ Baur, *Christenthum*, i. 44.

Christianity its due place in human history, as part of the orderly processes of human thought and faith. Each religion that comes and goes is bound to recognize its relations with past and future alike. Christianity can well afford to accept its human beginnings, and does itself little justice in claiming that it could enter the world only by thrusting another and older religion out. It arose in Hebrew soil, drew its nourishment from the Hebrew breast, appropriated in due time the entire Hebrew Scripture, and became in its triumph the triumph in large part of Hebrew faith. We must look far into the second century, before Gentile converts cease to quote Hebrew prophecy as the main evidence of the truth of Christianity.¹ So far as our early records show,

¹ Justin, *Dial. with Trypho*, 2, 3, 7, 8; *Apol.* i. 53, ii. 12; Tertullian *adv. Marcion*, iii. 2, 3.

The church of the second century came to the point of denying to the Jews any right to their own Scriptures. The only truth in those Scriptures, it was claimed, was their hidden or allegorical meaning, and this the Jews, corrupted by Satan, had neglected; hence the Law and Prophets belonged to the Christians who had first understood them. Barnabas, iv. 6, v. 6, viii. 7, ix. 4, x. 2. Comp. Harnack, *Ausbreitung*, 47; 2 Cor. iii. 14-16.

Christianity came, like every other good thing, through normal human procedures; through the gradual loosening of ancestral ties, the slow adaptation of the old beliefs to the new facts, the steady assimilation of whatever it needed out of other faiths for its own uses.

The moment of separation can no longer be detected, if any such moment there was. Paul did not live to see it. His eyes were fixed upon the coming kingdom, in which there should be neither Greek nor Jew.¹ As the Christian church found by and by that it walked most easily alone, it continued alone, retaining still its loving hold upon the ancient Scriptures, without which it did not pretend to walk at all. It was far on in the second century before they had any other Bible.² The Jewish Scriptures, on being adopted by the Christian church, did not become Christian thereby; they remained

¹ Gal. iii. 28. Passages like J. ix. 22, 34, xii. 42, xvi. 2 show that by the time the Fourth Gospel was written, the separation was complete.

² Early Christian writers, down to about A. D. 150, apply the term "Scriptures" only to the Old Testament.

Jewish still, and remain so to this hour. No Christian preacher can read in his pulpit to-day from Prophets, Pentateuch, or Psalms without reaffirming, beside his Christian beliefs, this old testimony to the Hebrew faith. Paul's entire preaching was based on these writings, declaring simply their splendid fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth. It was his loyalty to his ancestral faith, and power to discern its higher significance, that gave him his unique place among the interpreters of religious thought.

This helps us to understand a little better the portraiture of Paul given in the Acts, which seems sometimes to the hasty reader so unworthy of the great apostle. Taking Paul's own words literally, when he says to the Galatians, for instance, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing. . . Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace"; we are greatly shocked when the Acts presents him at different times as still clinging to the Jewish ceremonial.

When he started on his second journey, and came again to Lystra, he found there, we are told, "a certain disciple named Timotheus, the son of a woman which was a Jewess, and believed, but his father was a Greek. . . . Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek." Now this happened, we are reminded, almost immediately after the meeting at Jerusalem, when Paul had so sternly refused to allow Titus to be circumcised, though the whole harmony of that distinguished gathering seemed to depend upon his yielding the point.¹ What was this, we are asked, but sheer tergiversation, if the account be true? Again on leaving Corinth, the Acts would have us believe that he stopped at Cenchrea, to have his head shorn, "for he had a vow"; furthermore, that he hastened away from Ephesus, after reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue, with the words, "I must by

¹ Gal. v. 2-4; A. xvi. 1-3; Gal. ii. 3-5.

all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." ¹

Still more surprising was his demeanor on reaching Jerusalem. The Christians of Jerusalem, holding the Law in devout reverence, had persuaded themselves that Paul was violating the Mosaic precepts and belittling the sacred rite of circumcision. Perhaps some of his sayings recorded for us in the epistles of Galatians or Corinthians had reached their ears. So numerous were these believers, and so inflamed by suspicion, that it was evident Paul would get no hearing from them, even if his life was safe at their hands. What should he do? His Jerusalem friends were ready with their counsel. Four of their number were about to discharge a Nazarite vow; a vow of special consecration whose conditions are minutely laid down in the Jewish Scriptures. Nazarites were to retire from the world for a certain season, be abstinent in food and drink,

¹ A. xviii. 18. Grammatically it may be either Paul or Aquila whose head was shorn; but why mention it at all in the case of Aquila? A. xviii. 21, xx. 16.

allow no razor to touch their heads, and at the end of the time appear at the temple, have their heads shorn, and, "offer their offering to the Lord, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings." If Paul would do the same, becoming a Nazarite with the rest and bearing the expenses of his poorer companions, the popular misconception would be allayed, and his mission in Jerusalem be accomplished. Paul assented, we are assured, entered upon the legal obligations, and awaited the result. Unfortunately, just before the time of separation was over, his fellow-Christians caught sight of him at his devotions, saw one of his Ephesian companions with him, and assumed that he was still at his unholy work, and had brought Greeks with him into the temple, "to pollute the holy place." Immediately, we are told, "All the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forth-

with the doors were shut."¹ He was with difficulty rescued from the hands of the excited people. To so little purpose had the apostle sought to abate Jewish prejudices and to show his full allegiance to the law.

This conduct certainly seems strange in our eyes. No twentieth century Christian could possibly have acted so. The accounts in Epistles and Acts cannot both be true, we declare; therefore the Acts must go by the board. But is it so certain that both cannot be true; both, in other words, as trustworthy as any of these primitive traditions? The customs here depicted, so grotesque to us, were the customs in which Paul had been reared, and which could hardly have lost all their sanctity in twenty or thirty years. Many Christian devotions, we must remember, look grotesque to-day to the outside observer; quite as grotesque as the shaven head, or the sacrificial he lamb or ewe lamb looks to us. Unless we suppose Paul on becoming Christian to have ceased

¹ A. xxi. 17-30. Comp. Gal. iv. 9, 10; Rom. ii. 29; iii. 20. For the Nazarite vow, see Num. vi. 2-21.

to be human, the seven days of seclusion need have been no pretence or empty form to him. Perhaps they brought back many glad recollections, and offered grateful refuge from worrying cares. In any case, his letters hardly allow us to think of him as having ever dropped the human for the saintly. With all his sledge-hammer independence at times, he was a man of moods. There were moments when bondage was not to be submitted to, "no, not for an hour"; there were moments also when he felt himself but the preacher of a many-sided faith, to be adapted to all possible needs, and all grades of belief. When he said to the Corinthians, "I am made all things to all men," he must have meant something. Of what moment of his career, supposing it to have already occurred, could he have more fitly said, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; . . . to them that are without law, as without law . . . that I might gain them that are without law."¹ In any case it was not so very long after this Corinthian letter

¹ Gal. ii. 3-5; 1 Cor. ix. 19-22.

that he came to Jerusalem. Read again the twenty-first chapter of Acts, and take note of its unstudied simplicity. This straightforward account, ampler far than we are accustomed to find in our sacred writings, cannot be brushed aside. If there is no verisimilitude here, there is no verisimilitude anywhere in the New Testament. If you were searching for a single passage to make your starting-point for an estimate of the apostle Paul, what chapter of Acts or Epistles should offer itself sooner than this bit of tradition, which, as it happens, may have come down to us directly from one of Paul's immediate companions ?¹ Hostile records might well have handed down the general picture of a time-serving apostle; they could hardly have fashioned, without some facts behind them, such definite details of a definite transaction. In any case, it is foolish, is it not, to try to regain from the mists of tradition a distinct

¹ The "we-passage" extends certainly as far as verse 18; and as the rest of the chapter covers the same incident, it may well come from the same source. There is nothing to determine these extracts except the change of personal pronouns.

personality, and yet disdain the very features which lend the lay-figure life. If we want, not the church-Paul, but the Paul of flesh and blood, we must accept him, so far as I can see, with all these occasional reversions to his nation's ritual. He was not asking himself what the world would think of him after nineteen centuries had passed. He saw the maddened crowd at Jerusalem, and thought them as well worth saving as the Gentiles of Ephesus or Corinth. And after all, a Paul with corners and rough places, a Paul of strange surprises, is not so much worse than the erect and unbending Paul who, having once conceived of himself as the "Apostle to the Gentiles," could never consent to pose in any lesser rôle. This is the Paul, in any case, whom our scanty records present. We may deem ourselves fortunate that his analyst was not too prim a historian to preserve for us these unexpected characteristics.

If this picture, drawn from Acts and Epistles alike, is correct, we must think of Christianity in Paul's hands as still part of

the ancient faith ; fully conscious of its great message, but not regarding itself as an independent revelation before which all older faiths must hide their heads. The Hebrew prophecies were still awaiting their final fulfilment ; though in a larger way than the prophets themselves had dreamed. To Paul the great secret, the mystery of the ages, had been revealed. " For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in ; and so all Israel shall be saved. . . . For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." ¹

¹ R. xi. 25, 26, 32, 33. See Pfield. Paulinismus, 530.

CHAPTER IV

THE MYSTIC

WE have just been viewing Paul in the most practical moments of his active career. This must not blind us, however, to another side of his nature, apparently unrelated, yet of prime importance in understanding the real man. He was living in an age of great intellectual activity. The Jews of that period were less given to philosophy than the Greeks ; but it was quite impossible, even if there were no testimony on the point,¹ that the synagogues should remain unconscious of the religious

¹ For Paul's indebtedness to the apocryphal and apocalyptic literature current among the Jews at that time, see Brückner, *Entstehung d. Paul. Christologie* ; Gunkel, *Zum relig. Verständniss d. N. Test.* ; Hausrath, *N. T. Times*, iii. 20-30 ; Pfeid. *Paulinismus*, *Einleitung*, 20 ff. ; Thackeray, *Relation of St. Paul to Contemp. Jew. Thought*, chap. i. ; Kabisch, *Eschatologie d. Paulus*.

speculations that were spreading through the Roman empire, as eastern and western thought came into contact with each other. According to some accounts, Paul had been a scholar of Gamaliel; and if this was the Gamaliel known to tradition as having taught his followers "Greek wisdom,"¹ Paul must have been familiar with the advanced scholarship of the synagogue. What we have already seen of him shows that his mind was not averse to such enquiries; and it is this point that attracts our attention now.²

Turning again for a moment to Corinth, it will be remembered that among the parties which had sprung up there immediately after the apostle's departure, was one which bore the name of Apollos.³ Coming from

¹ A. xxii. 3. This incidental allusion is all that we know about Paul's relation to Gamaliel. He never mentions him himself, and we must not therefore attach too much importance to this tradition. Moreover, if we are to accept later investigations, the Gamaliel who was member of the Sanhedrin in Paul's time was not noted as scholar or teacher. It was probably his grandson, Gamaliel II., to whom the tradition mentioned in the text refers. Jewish Encyc., under Gamaliel.

² See pp. 11, 12.

³ 1 Cor. i. 12; Bacon, 273.

Alexandria, learned it was said in Alexandrian criticism, and trained perhaps in Greek schools of oratory, Apollos seems to have captivated many who found Jewish theology little to their taste, or who welcomed the graces of speech whose lack in himself Paul felt so keenly.¹ There was evidently no personal antagonism between these two leaders, still less any jealousy, as Paul commends his rival in the friendliest way to the Corinthians, and we find them working together cordially in Ephesus.² At the same time we cannot help conjecturing that the apostle is thinking chiefly of Apollos in his pointed comments upon those who "preach the gospel . . . with wisdom of words." "Where is the wise?" he asks, "where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Against this "wisdom" he sets the preaching of the cross as destined through its very "foolishness" to "save them that believed." He puts the two in sharpest contrast. The gospel is not addressed to

¹ 2 Cor. x. 10.

² 1 Cor. iii. 5-7, 22, xvi. 12.

the great or wise; the most ignorant and lowly are sufficient for it. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." For himself, he had not pretended in his preaching to depend upon the "enticing words of man's wisdom," or to go beyond this simple gospel of the cross, intelligible to all. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."¹

This sounds like the voice of a man to whom all learning and philosophy are anathema. Yet this eulogy of folly, as we soon find, is but delicate irony on the apostle's part. He reminds the Greek, disdain-

¹ 1 Cor. i. 17-31, ii. 1-5. }

ful of the lowly gospel, that in this very folly is a wisdom profounder far than all earthly philosophy. In this extraordinary chapter, we seem to plunge without preparation into mystic realms of esoteric and exoteric knowledge, dear in Paul's time to many schools of theosophic thought. Christianity too, we discover, like the old "mysteries," has its initiated, has its "perfect," has its philosophy, — too profound, indeed, for any but the spiritually-minded to receive. We as well as the Greeks, says Paul, "speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory."¹ This occult wisdom is hidden from the world, and revealed only by the spirit; God's spirit, which searches divine things as the mind of man searches human things. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7; Holtzmann, Hand-Comm. ii. 106; Bacon, 179.

have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.”¹ This spiritual intuition, as the philosophy of a later day calls it, Christian teachers were supposed to have received; the Spirit giving words as well as thoughts; for spiritual knowledge can be communicated only by spiritual speech. “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; putting spiritual things into spiritual terms.” All this unfathomable knowledge, impossible to the natural man and folly to him, it was Paul’s apostolic function, illuminated by the mind of Christ, to know and impart. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolish-

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9-11.

ness to him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual discerneth all things." "For who," adds Paul, quoting Isaiah, "hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" The prophet's question is at last answered: "We have the mind of Christ."¹ At the same time, this esoteric wisdom was not for every-day preaching; it must be reserved for those spiritually prepared. Such the Corinthians had not shown themselves, nor yet were they able to receive all the apostle's revelations. They must wait till their strifes and divisions were forgotten. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye now able. For ye are yet carnal."²

It should be said that this claim of direct illumination is not one that Paul frequently

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 12-16; R. viii. 26.

² 1 Cor. iii. 1-3.

puts forward. It is elicited here by the exigencies of the situation. He would meet the Greeks on their own ground, and beat them with their own weapons. Only now and then, in grave moments, does he impart to his followers these solemn secrets, these "mysteries" as he styles them, of the divine councils. In these moments, however, they assume great significance in his mind. They are secrets which "God ordained before the world," "hid from ages and generations, but now made manifest to his saints." They entitle him to speak of things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." They justify him at times, it would seem, in standing apart from the other apostles, with inspirations or visions more valid than all their traditions.¹ It is easy to imagine the mighty impulse given to Paul's religious convictions by this belief that he was in immediate communication with heaven.

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 7; Col. i. 26; Eph. iii. 2-5; 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; R. xi. 25, xvi. 25, 26; 1 Th. iv. 15. See Hausrath, *Time of Jesus*, I. 113 ff.

Instances come later in this same epistle. Among the many hard questions which reached him from Corinth the most serious was that of the resurrection of Christ. To his Jewish followers, whose traditions told them of ancient patriarchs who had passed bodily into the heavens without the preliminary descent into the lower regions, we may suppose that the resurrection would have created little difficulty ; but with Greek and Roman converts it was different, and the notion of a bodily escape from the grave was evidently quite inconceivable to them. It was not the philosophical doctrine of immortality which was at stake. This had been long familiar to the more thoughtful Greeks, and some conception of spiritual immortality had found its way even into the later Jewish apochrypha.¹ What aroused the dissent of the Corinthians was the insistence of the Christians upon the frequent reappearance of Jesus in visible form after his entombment. About this they had many curious questions to ask : " How are the dead raised

¹ Wis. Sol. ii. 23, xv. 3 ; Toy, Judaism and Chris. 251 f.

up," they asked, "with what body do they come?"

This protest Paul meets in the fifteenth chapter of our present epistle; availing himself apparently of one of his special revelations, or "mysteries." Bodily resurrection, he assures the doubters, does not mean necessarily the rising of the actual body. Far from it. As beasts and fishes have bodies differing from each other, and sun and moon have their celestial clothing of light, or as the seed assumes new form as it breaks from the soil, so the human soul rising into the heavenly kingdom shall have a body adapted to its new nature and pertaining to it. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This higher form can be of but one kind; it must partake of the spiritual essence belonging to all heavenly beings, of finer quality than the natural or psychic forms which have hitherto occupied the earth. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And

as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”¹ The reign of the earthy was past with the coming of the second Adam. Jewish commentators, it would seem, had already pointed out the distinction between the first and second chapters of Genesis; the first declaring that “God created man in his own image,” the second, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”² These they regarded as two distinct creations; the first, the ideal man, sharing the essence of Deity, and present with him from the beginning; the second the real man as he had appeared throughout human history. It is this passage of the Scriptures which Paul has here in mind, and if he had been familiar with it in the syna-

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 35-52.

² 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. Comp. Gen. i. 27, ii. 7. Paul cites here a Scripture passage unknown to us in this form, but taken apparently from some version familiar to the schools. The quotation may cover only the first clause of the verse, but probably covers the whole; and in any case shows how Paul interpreted the ancient text. Weizs. ii. 276; Hausrath, *Time of Apos.* iii. 22; Brückner, 75 f, 204; Hall's Papias, 143 n.

gogue, there is little doubt that he had learned, before his conversion to Christianity, to identify this first or ideal man with the expected Jewish Messiah. "So it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth earthy: the second man is from heaven." The first Adam with his progeny, through the ages, has been animal, natural, psychic; as the new era approaches with its spiritual progeny will appear a corresponding spiritual body. "So also the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."¹ What this spiritual texture shall be, Paul does not tell us, nor perhaps claim to know. We may suppose some light-essence, such as was imagined to belong to angels, or to Christ as he appeared in dazzling vision. Into those spiritual realms, Christ being first to rise from the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 42-44; Kabisch, 188-194.

dead leads the way followed by all his own. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . . But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."

After Christ's coming, to complete Paul's vision of those awful hours, must follow a long period, during which the Messiah must overthrow Satan and all other enemies of the kingdom; destroying finally death itself. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." Then comes the final consummation, when the entire sinful creation has been destroyed, when death has given way to life, and all including the Son himself have become subject to God alone. "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself also be subject to him that put all things under

him, that God may be all in all.”¹ Such is the “mystery” which Paul here imparts to the Corinthians, and in which he leaves this momentous problem of the future. “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we (who do not die) shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?”²

At a later period of his ministry, when his great sufferings led him at times to “despair even of life” and to fear lest he should fall by the way before the Messiah should appear,³ the whole question assumed a graver aspect to him, and gives to his

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 20-28.

² 2 Cor. i. 8-10.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 51-55.

second letter to the Corinthians a much more mystic strain. For us moderns his thought is so remote from our ordinary conceptions that it becomes difficult to follow, and we can only conjecture his exact meaning. Apparently he conceives of our spiritual body as in constant process of growth within the believer, or possibly awaiting him already in the heavens. Under the Jewish belief, death was followed by a long and spectral waiting in the grave for the general resurrection. For the Christian believer was no such dreary episode. As the outward man perished, the inward self was renewed day by day, its every affliction adding to its glory. This gross tabernacle of the flesh grows more and more burdensome to Paul, and he longs to throw it off, anxious only that his spiritual body be really ready, and he be not left naked, like the spectres in the lower world. These meditations shape themselves to Paul's mind in singularly exalted form. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a

house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”¹

The rabbinical influences to which Paul had been subjected, and which show themselves so plainly in the above passages, cannot be fully understood without taking into account the allegorical methods of the period, and recognizing in Paul one of the trained experts in that field. In Alexandria, as Philo's writings show, this style of Scripture interpretation had reached a sublime sufficiency, in which the entire Jewish Scriptures yielded themselves to the magician's touch, revealing under their apparently historic, or legal, or poetic surface unfathomable depths of occult wisdom. In Palestine,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 1-4. Comp. Wis. Sol. ix. 15; Pfeid. Paulin. 29, 30; Kabisch, 220, 287.

the allegorists were evidently not far behind. Paul quotes the ancient Scriptures far less for direct instruction or edification, or on their own merits, than for the prophetic meaning which they hide. The whole gospel, and indeed all that was happening in those momentous hours "God had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures."¹ To those who had not the key to this secret sense, or could not discern the spiritual purport lurking beneath the letter, the Scriptures were but barren ground. It was in this school that Paul had gained that mastery of hidden truth that shows itself throughout his epistles. Modern criticism picks many flaws in his Biblical interpretations, but these interpretations bring us nearer than anything else in his writings to the mental peculiarities of the times. With this key in his hands it was not difficult to find the complete Christian story foreshadowed in ancient prophecy.

One or two instances of this we have already come across in Paul's relations with

¹ Rom. i. 2.

the Corinthians. To the modern mind one of the finest qualities of the Jewish Scriptures is the kindly spirit latent there under all the ferocities of a barbaric age. The chosen people may exterminate their enemies root and branch, but they show the tenderest consideration for the needy, and have a warm heart even towards the beasts of the field. The allegorist sees nothing of this. When Moses says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," thus enabling the poor beast to get some comfort from the straggling wisps within his reach, it is quite inconceivable to Paul that this should have been the real object of the precept. He introduces the passage at a time when his right to look to the Corinthians for his support, as the other apostles were doing, was challenged. But it is not the humanity of the precept that strikes him. "Doth God take care of oxen," he asks, "or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that plougheth should plough in hope; and that he that thresheth

in hope should be partaker of his hope. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."¹ It should be remembered that Paul was much more generous in this case in his acts than in his doctrine, and insisted upon seeking no reward other than the reward of "preaching the gospel without charge";² it is only his manner of reading the law of Moses that interests us here.

To our minds again, the story of the Israelites led through the parting waters, marshalled by cloud by day and fire by night, and finding water running from the rocks for their refreshment, has great oriental charm. The allegorist sees little of its poetic beauty. He takes it all seriously. To him the sea and the cloud meant in reality the rite of

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 9-14. Comp. Deut. xxv. 4. Fortunately we can set Deut. xxii. 4, Prov. xii. 10 against Paul's rabbinical interpretation. The Scriptures were more kindly than he thought. It is said by travellers in Palestine to-day that the Mohammedans, like the Orientals generally, still follow the Mosaic precepts in the treatment of their animals, while the Christians of that country, true to rabbinical traditions, leave the muzzle on. Robinson, Palestine, ii. 521.

² 1 Cor. ix. 18.

baptism ; the manna and the gushing stream were the bread and wine of the Supper. The rock was no rock : it was Christ himself actually following his people as they journeyed to satisfy their thirst. These ancient tales had lost all their romance. They were simply types, pointing to the solemn events of the last great catastrophe. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."¹

Even when it comes to the most tragic moments of the Master's career, the allegorist can look behind each event to find its type imbedded in holy writ. It might seem a hopeless effort to discover the crucifixion of Jesus, his three days' burial, his resurrection, exactly predicted hundreds of years before, — indeed to us it is worse than futile to handle in this prosaic fashion the profound pathos of those hours ; but the allegorist is ready for the task. Possibly Paul had sought out

¹ 1 Cor. x. 1-4, 11. For the poetic side of this incident see Ps. lxxviii. 15.

these proofs in advance before accepting the new faith, to reconcile himself to the strange conception of a suffering and dying Messiah, or perhaps certain prophetic passages were already in vogue when he came among the disciples, as bearing on these events. Perhaps he had heard such citations as these : " I know that my redeemer liveth " ; " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. " Possibly this verse from Hosea seemed to them prophetic : " After two days will he revive us ; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. " Or the passage from Isaiah beginning : " He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. " ¹ In any case Paul assured the Corinthians that such prophecies there were, and he had plainly brought them forward as his best evidence of the doctrines which he preached. " For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; and that he was buried,

¹ Job. xix. 25; Hos. vi. 2; Is. liii. 3-9; Ps. xvi. 10.

and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”¹

In addressing the Galatians again, Paul makes large use of these unanswerable arguments in the strictest rabbinical style. The history of Abraham was especially pregnant with meaning to his mind. Had not Abraham two sons, one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman? These facts, commonplace in themselves, were types of more august events. They prefigure the Jewish and Christian covenants. Hagar the bondmaid, represents Mt. Sinai in Arabia, mystically corresponding with the earthly Jerusalem, enslaved to the law; Sarah, on the other hand, the real wife, corresponds with the heavenly Jerusalem, which is free, and is mother of the messianic community. “Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. . . . But Jerusalem which is above is

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. See Pfeid. Paulin. 10; Wernle, i. 144. We find this same idea in the Gospels, as coming from Jesus himself. L. xxiv. 25-27. See also A. viii. 32-35; 1 Pet. ii. 21-24.

free, which is the mother of us all.”¹ All this is to restrain the Galatians from turning again to the bondage of the Mosaic law. To enforce his point Paul quotes further from the eloquent words of Isaiah, addressed to Jerusalem: “Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.”² The “barren” or “desolate” according to Paul is not Jerusalem in her old-time affliction, it is Sarah, whose spiritual posterity are so far to outnumber the children of the fruitful Hagar. And as the son of Hagar once mocked or “persecuted” the son of Sarah, so does the fleshly Israel persecute the spiritual children of Abraham. But this persecution is no longer to last. As the Scripture commanded imperatively “Cast out this bondwoman and her son,” so now, in messianic days, “the son of the

¹ Gal. iv. 21-26. In what way Hagar is equivalent to Sinai (25) is not at all clear. Holtzmann suggests that it may be an instance of letter values, or Gematria, as in Rev. xiii. 18. Hand-Comm. ii. 55. Comp. Augustine, Civ. Dei, xi. 30; Weber, § 27. 2.

² Is. liv. 1.

bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”¹

It is impossible for us to take this sort of argument seriously ; though to the rabbinical school they were evidently of profoundest import. The lapse of nineteen hundred years makes itself nowhere more apparent than in the processes of human reasoning. The critical methods of to-day, born out of generations of scientific research, would have been as inconclusive to Paul and his churches as their scholastic subtleties seem to us. So far as Paul himself is concerned it is pleasant to remember, that when he forgets his allegories he is led to more humane conclusions than the above harsh verdict which casts out of the kingdom all but the little band of believers. These singular exegetics would be of little value to us did they not at the same time help us to understand other lines of speculation which characterize Paul's later epistles.

¹ Gen. xxi. 9-12; Gal. iv. 27-31.

Of the greatest interest are his views of the nature of Christ. Learned writers call this Paul's christology ; but as Paul himself knew nothing of our scholastic terms let us call it his conceptions of Jesus. As we have already noted, he had his own ideas on this theme, very different from those held by the older disciples. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, as we have just seen, he speaks of Jesus as the second Adam. The second Adam, according to this view, had been with God from the beginning of time ; he had been the divine agent in creation, "by whom are all things, and we by him." In the fulness of time, when the earthly epoch approached its end, this celestial being was sent down to earth "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to release the race from the bondage of the flesh, and open the way, through his death and resurrection, into the life of the spirit.¹ These mystic ideals, which Paul seems to have brought with him into Christianity, are still further developed in the group of minor epistles, claiming to have been written in his captivity.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 45-47; see p. 117. 1 Cor. viii. 6; Rom. viii. 3.

The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians have fallen under grave suspicions at the hand of modern criticism, as they are thought to reflect the ideas as well as phraseology of a subsequent period of Christian thought. But as the exact development of early ideas is a question which must follow our determination of dates rather than precede it, and as the historic evidence of the genuineness of these epistles is quite as good as of their larger companions, we are justified, I think, in bringing them into the circle of Paul's writings.¹ If not his, they show the immediate development of his ideas at the hands of sympathizing disciples; if actually his, as I suppose, they show to what extreme speculations on this exhaustless theme his enquiring mind was led. In point of fact, the ideas of Christ here given can all be found in less pronounced form in his earlier

¹ The earliest collection of Paul's Epistles contains these three with the rest (about A. D. 150), while all writers before that period show quite as much familiarity with these lesser writings as with the larger ones. Comp. Hall's Papias, 283-286; Bacon, 208. For the other view, see Baur, Paulus, ii. 3-49; Holtzmann, Einl. 254-270; Klöpper, Brief an die Epheser.

epistles. The writings belong, if genuine, to the closing hours of his ministry, his imprisonment at Cesarea or at Rome.¹

The Epistle to the Philippians stands on a firmer footing than the rest from its peculiarly intimate tone, and the entire naturalness of its details.² It was probably written in Rome,³ at a time when his earlier hopes had been profoundly disturbed by his many sufferings and reverses. Though still believing that the "day of Christ" was at hand, he is no longer sure of witnessing that event himself, and even longs at times for a speedy release. Yet his heroic spirit does not desert him, whatever the issue of the present peril. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."⁴ Though his active career is over,

¹ Eph. iii. 1, iv. 1, vi. 20; Phil. i. 7, iv. 22; Col. iv. 10, 18.

² Phil. i. 5-8, ii. 25-30, iv. 15-19.

³ Phil. i. 13, iv. 22.

⁴ Phil. i. 40, 21-24; iii. 11. So far as it goes, it is good testimony to the genuineness of this letter, that the most impor-

the old disputes between Jew and Gentile still pursue him, and he is moved to a more bitter attack upon the Judaizers, and a more explicit avowal of his own Jewish antecedents, than ever before.¹ He appeals to his warring followers for harmony, setting before them the example of their Master. It is characteristic of his thought, however, that even here he cites no incidents of Christ's earthly career, his charity or his tenderness, his appeals to his own disciples for brotherly love, or his reproofs of their petty ambitions; it is the celestial Christ that he has in view, in situations strangely remote from our common thought. He conceives of Christ as holding so exalted a rank among the attendants upon Deity that he might well aspire to absolute equality with God; yet, with this dignity within his reach, stooping to a human form and an ignominious death. In the face of this sublime renunciation of a

tant rôle therein falls to the otherwise unknown Epaphroditus. Few of Paul's companions appear in so interesting a guise. (Phil. ii. 25-30, iv. 18.)

¹ Phil. iii. 1-6.

glory almost equal with the Godhead, how becoming in his followers "in lowliness of mind, each to esteem other better than themselves."¹ "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus : who being in the form of God did not presume to grasp equality with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In assuming the human form, and leading, even in appearance, a common earthly career, Jesus, according to this view, had profoundly humiliated himself ; and in reward for this humiliation, God has now exalted him to the highest rank among angelic beings, to receive the homage of men and angels. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of creatures that are in heaven or on earth, and under the earth ; and that every tongue should

¹ Phil. i. 27, ii. 1-4.

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”¹

The Epistle to the Colossians is addressed to a little community of Asia Minor, lying within range of Paul's missionary activities at Ephesus, but which for some reason he seems never to have visited.² While rich in practical precepts, and interesting in its personal details, it lifts us into the same inaccessible regions as the preceding letter, and contains allusions by no means easy, at this remote distance, to interpret. Commentators are forced into many conjectures in explaining its language. The angel-ranks, which were then supposed to people the heavens, seem to have affected the Colossians quite as the heathen gods affected the Greeks and Romans. They had been

¹ Phil. ii. 5-11. For different translations of ii. 6, see Holtz. Hand-Comm. on this verse; also Bunsen's Bibelwerk; Meyer, Krit. Exeget. Kommentar; Hausrath, Time of Apos. iii. 100; Bacon, 374.

² Col. i. 4-9, ii. 1.

Renan, while finding many difficulties in accepting this Epistle, yet considers it the work of Paul, written at Rome. St. Paul, vii-x. So Kabisch, 179. Its connection with the Ephesians is obvious.

seduced into angel worship, paying their homage apparently to the heavenly beings surrounding Christ, instead of confining it to Christ alone, whom Paul regarded as carrying in himself the very essence, the *pleroma*, of the Godhead. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the elemental rulers of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." This *pleroma* passes from Christ into all his worshippers. "And ye are made full in him, which is the head of every principality and power."¹ He alone should be the object of your worship, rather than the inferior beings to which these teachers of a vain philosophy

¹ Col. ii. 8-10, i. 19. This term "*pleroma*" or fulness, meaning apparently the qualities of Deity conceived as filling the universe, became afterwards a familiar Gnostic phrase. Paul's use of it here without explanation shows that it was already current among the Colossians, and evidently familiar to himself, though appearing in this sense only here and in Eph. iii. 19. Grammatically verse i. 19 may perfectly well read, "For in him the entire *Pleroma* was pleased to dwell; and — to reconcile all things to him —" making the *Pleroma* the personal agent in the divine transaction. This is v. Soden's view; Holtz. Hand-Comm. on Col. i. 19.

are leading you. "Let no man beguile you of your reward by a gratuitous humility, and angel-worship, making much of what he had seen (in visions) and vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body . . . knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."¹ Against this angel-worship Paul sets before the Colossians a sublime ideal of the position of Christ in the universe: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all created beings: for in him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created through him and to him. And he is before all things, and in him all things consist: . . . For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."²

¹ Col. ii. 16-23, an obscure passage, of which the only thing quite clear is that it is a denunciation of angel-worship.

² Col. i. 15-19. The position of Christ in his relation to other celestial beings, as conceived by Paul, is nowhere more clearly indicated than here. Christ, as the image of God himself, and the very pleroma of the Godhead, stands quite above

From these obscure words we must form what picture we can of the peculiar perils which beset the Asia Minor communities. Paul, as a preacher, could not create a new phraseology, or new religious or philosophical notions for his hearers; he must address the prevailing conceptions of the hour, almost as familiar to Jewish as to Gentile ears. It would appear that these troublesome teachers were pushing to extremes the ideas which Paul himself had learned in mystic schools, and whose natural abuses he was now to feel. Not having the weapon at hand of denying out and out the "gods many and lords many" of the popular belief,¹ he could only hold the Colossians to their faith in Christ as the head of these invisible hierarchies. We have in this picture, no doubt, a foreshadowing of the great movement which was soon, under the name of Gnosticism, to perplex the fathers of the church for generation after generation.

all the angels, who have no such supreme prerogative. Indeed all such creatures, visible and invisible, were created by Christ and have become reconciled to God only through his death.

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 5.

Paul, however unconsciously, is in the beginnings of this current, and finds in its conceptions an attractive imagery setting forth the mystic union of the believer and of the church with Christ. "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." This is the mystery he is sent to impart. "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God, even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. . . . For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."¹

The Epistle to the Ephesians is, to a large extent, a repetition, or perhaps a re-writing,

¹ Col. i. 18, 25-27; iii. 1-3.

of that to the Colossians. In the first collection of Paul's epistles, about the middle of the second century,¹ it passes under the name of "Epistle to the Laodiceans," which is more than likely to be its true title. In this case we may suppose it to be the letter referred to in the passage: "When this epistle is read among you (Colossians), cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."² Being written under the same circumstances these two might naturally repeat each other, one letter with slight alterations being perhaps used for both purposes.³ The longing to comprehend the exalted rank of the Christ, and fix his exact place in the celestial circles, easily led Christian thinkers into many vagaries, and it is not strange that Paul and his suc-

¹ Marcion's.

² Col. iv. 16.

³ Not only is the general arrangement of the two epistles the same, but out of the 155 verses of Ephesians 40 correspond closely with Colossians. For these points, see Papias, 283-286. The relation of these two epistles to each other is still the subject of the greatest controversy. The best *résumé* is given in Holtz. Hand-Comm. iii. 11 ff., 79 ff. (v. Soden).

cessors encountered these speculations under various extraordinary forms. In combating them, Paul is led, in this epistle, to a more idealistic conception of the person of Christ than ever before.

The old strife between Jew and Gentile Paul here conceives as part of the eternal plans of God, ordered before the foundation of the world. According to this conception all created things were to be brought together in Christ, not earthly beings alone but heavenly as well. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."¹ To this end he hath set the Messiah at his right hand, and put all orders of spirits under his feet. This to Paul's mind is the significance of the church which mystically represents the body of Christ, itself filled with the pleroma of the Godhead, and thus becoming the ideal end of the divine scheme. "That ye may know . . . the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who be-

¹ Eph. i. 4, 10, ii. 11-14.

lieve, . . . which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come : and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head of all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”¹ In times past they had been “children of wrath,” and were under the “prince of the power of the air,” who rules this world ; now having risen with Christ, “God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us . . . hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Thus “the middle wall of partition” has been broken down, and we, both Jew and Gentile, “have access by one spirit unto the Father.” Gentiles had become fellow-citizens with the chosen people. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints,

¹ Eph. i. 18-23.

and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”¹ So completely has the idealizing process been carried through in these hours of imprisonment, that these heavenly proceedings are thought of as already occurring, and possessing a reality beyond all earthly events. This mystery of the entering of the Gentiles, hid in the eternal counsels from the beginning of the world, had been revealed to Paul that he might preach it to the Gentiles. “By revelation God made known to me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel . . . to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”² Nor is this mystery

¹ Eph. ii. 1-6, 14-20. Comp. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

² Eph. iii. 1-9. The title “ holy apostles ” (5) or the grouping

disclosed to Jew and Gentile only ; the spirit world also receives the intelligence, and now for the first time is made aware through the church of the divine purpose. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God." Paul expresses the hope that his followers may be enabled to learn the hidden meaning of these mysteries, and may even be filled with the pleroma of the Godhead which belongs to Christ himself. "That ye . . . may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."¹

together of the apostles with the Old Testament prophets (ii. 20) was not uncommon in the second century when all were regarded as sacred personalities, but is quite unsupposable as coming from Paul, who claimed himself to be one of the apostles (1 Cor. ix. 1). These passages, therefore, constitute the chief difficulty in accepting the Epistle as Paul's, and can be explained, supposing the writing otherwise genuine, only as worked into the text by later copyists.

¹ Eph. iii. 10, 17-19. The close resemblance between these conceptions and those current a little later in Gnostic circles

The admirable practical precepts with which Paul closes his letter take graver meaning to his mind in view of the character of the adversaries against whom the young faith had to contend. It was not with mere human agencies that they were fighting, it was with the whole array of evil spirits, with Satan at their head. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against spirits of evil in heavenly places."¹

It must be confessed that these singular pictures of the invisible world crowded with angel-forms are hardly distinguishable from the old-time polytheism against which the young Christianity was inveighing. In those days, quite as in more modern times, we can see that pure monotheism was a matter rather of closet speculation than of practical religious faith. At the same time, Paul does not forget the "One God" of his an-

has never been better shown than by Baur, *Paulus*, ii. 3-88. Accepting these three letters as genuine (as still seems to me probable), Paul certainly made great strides in that direction.

¹ Eph. vi. 12.

cient worship, and does not regard these intermediate agencies as affecting his supreme majesty. "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit," he says, "in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."¹ It is plain that this language is not to be taken in the sense of our modern philosophy, whose phraseology and ideas are alike foreign to him. He is not speaking of the "immanent God." He is no pantheist, though this passage as well as his address to the Athenians² are so often taken in that sense; but conceives consistently of the one supreme God, as acting through many spiritual agencies, and able to impart his own spirit not to Christ alone, but to all his children. God remains, in this view, absolutely

¹ Eph. iv. 3-6. Some writers prefer Paul in his polytheistic moods to the Paul falling back so rigidly upon his Jewish monotheism. Hartmann, *Das relig. Bewusstsein*, 531 ff.; Bacon, 311 ff.

² A. xvii. 28.

distinct from humanity and from Christ, though filling with his divine fulness all who, in fellowship with Christ, enter into the spiritual world.¹

One might well ask, in following these enchanting visions, what becomes of the simple Galilean life, as depicted by the earlier evangelists. In what relation did the man Jesus stand to this heaven-descended Son of God? Paul must often have asked himself this question; at the same time he takes singularly little pains to explain the mystery. He claims no revelation on this point; nor has he any theory of his own to propound. Convinced as he was of the one supreme fact, that Jesus of Nazareth, once crucified, had appeared to him in heavenly

¹ For an interesting study of these later epistles in their relation to the "mixed background of ideas against which we must trace the development of the Pauline doctrine of Christ," together with the "angelology and demonology of apocalypse," the "mystery religions," Mithraic, Eleusinian or Bacchic, and the Logos ideas, current at that time, with their influence upon Paul's doctrines as well as his vocabulary, see Bacon, *Story of St. Paul*, Lec. ix. Comp. also, Cumont, *Mysteries of Mithra*; Thackeray, *Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, ch. vi.; Pfeid. *Urchristenthum*, ii. Absch. 3; Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, i. 56 n.

guise, thus proving himself the Christ, the exact process by which the Christ entered into the flesh seems to have had small importance to him. He leaves that to be decided by later generations, with theological interests at stake. One thing only attracts our attention. He rarely speaks of Jesus as a man,¹ nor concerns himself with his human career. He assures us that while leading an earthly life for a season, "he knew no sin."² His fleshly form, though resembling that of men, had not the qualities which commonly belong to the flesh, and make the mortal subject to transgression. Paul hesitates to speak of it as an actual body. He prefers the expressions, "in the likeness of sinful flesh"; "made in the likeness of men"; "found in fashion as a

¹ R. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 47. Also, 1 Tim. ii. 5. It seems to have been quite possible for the Jews to conceive of the Messiah as man, and yet as a preëxistent being. According to a common notion he was to remain on the earth concealed till the appointed time. Baruch, Apoc. xxix. 3; Weber, § 79; Harnack, Dogma, i. 322; J. vii. 27. It was reserved for the author of Hebrews (iv. 15, ii. 18) to speak of him as "in all points tempted like as we are."

² 2 Cor. v. 21.

man."¹ He leaves us to interpret these phrases for ourselves; and most of us I think, if left to ourselves, would understand them as meaning a body which to the eye was like others, but was not real flesh. The only flesh that the world knows anything about is subject, in its very essence, to moral infirmities. If an actual body is meant, why use any explanatory terms whatever? Most commentators, in view of later controversies, refuse to accept this natural meaning.² Yet the fact remains that, whether through Paul's influence or otherwise, it was a widespread theory for years that the form in which Jesus appeared on earth was only apparent flesh, incapable of suffering on the cross. The writers of the second century are full of allusions to this belief. It was common among the Gnostics, and was an idea which the Fathers held in special abhorrence.³ It was pronounced heresy, there-

¹ R. viii. 3; Phil. ii. 7, 8.

² Holtzmann on Rom. viii. 3; Pfeid. *Paulinismus*, 132, 3; Weizs. i. 143; Kabisch, 323; Holsten, *Ev. Peter and Paul*, 439.

³ 1 J. iv. 3; Polycarp, vii. 1; Tertull. *Car. Chris.* i. 4, 9; *Prax.* 27, 30; *adv. Marc.* v. 14, i. 24; *Iren.* iii. 11, 3; 16, 6, v. 14, 3. See Papias, 298.

fore, and under the title of Docetism bore a discredited name for centuries. Yet it cannot be denied that it was a perfectly natural supposition for those who first faced this problem, and as an attempted solution of the insoluble mystery of the incarnation, was quite as unforced as any of the metaphysical devices of the Christian Councils. With Paul's words before them, as well as the Fourth Gospel, it is not strange that Docetism was a hard heresy to kill.

If we are inclined to demur at these peculiar notions which characterize Paul's epistles, the angel hierarchies, the present world ruled by evil spirits until the coming of the Christ, Paul's claims to illumination, and his distinction between the initiated and the profane, we must remember that they all came to him by right through the oriental and hellenistic beliefs shown so plainly in the current apocalypses and the later apocryphal writings of the Jews. This whole occult or allegorical tendency is to be frankly accepted as an essential part of the religious spirit of the hour. If Hebrew

scripture and tradition were to have any connection with the philosophical thought of the age, it could be established on no easier terms than through the allegorical interpretations alluded to above which had found their home in Alexandrian Judaism. We cannot restrict the spiritual imagination in these formative hours, nor prescribe its course, nor assign its limits. For the solution of the harder Christian problems, and their reconciliation with the older scriptures, the path of allegory was the pleasantest to tread. What was it but giving to prosaic facts their deeper signification? In religion, as in art, when the creative imagination fails, allegory offers itself as the easiest equivalent. Yet even homely facts have their rights; and the allegorical habit, however bent on spiritual values, must face the defects that go with its brilliant qualities. The danger of resolving all facts into symbols is not only the indifference to facts which it engenders, but still more the enfeebled sense of reality which it entails. The Christian church inherited from Paul his lofty conceptions of

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the superterrestrial nature of its founder, and based its theology on these ideals ; it also caught his singular disregard of the human realities of Jesus' life and words. It received a splendid idealism, but unfortunately lost for ages its historic scent. The task of the church for the twentieth century is to recover that scent.

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGIAN

IT is only with some looseness of speech that we can speak of Paul's theology. If we mean by it a definite system of Christian belief, there is slight justification for the word. One who regarded all human organizations, including synagogues, temples and churches, as speedily to disappear, could have found little room for theological systems ; nor is there any token of their existence in Paul's writings. If we insist upon a Pauline theology, it must be for our own satisfaction alone, or for the convenience of ecclesiastical synods, bound to announce to the world, under the shadow of Paul, their own beliefs. Convictions on all spiritual themes Paul unquestionably held, and in the most pronounced fashion ; but what we are

pleased to call his doctrines are simply the opinions which he imparted to Corinthians Galatians or Thessalonians, in answer to specific questions, or to meet the moment's contingencies; taking singularly little trouble to reconcile conflicting statements, or smooth down rough edges, or to methodize his views.¹ As such, of course, they have the highest interest for us. If we take the trouble ourselves to shape them into a balanced scheme, they can be made to cover large territories of religious thought, however reluctantly they lend themselves to the fancies of modern or mediæval dialectics. Once forget the pedantic titles of imputation, atonement, election, predestination and the rest, and merely ask what were the

¹ According to Weber, although after the time of Ezra a Jewish theology was gradually built up yet no theological systems in our sense were ever in vogue. "If we speak of a synagogue-theology (altsynagogale Theologie) we do not mean a 'system' in the scholastic sense, or any formal doctrines of faith or dogmatics. In the synagogue nothing of the kind was developed." *Jüdische Theologie*, Einleit. § 1. "The Jews — even the learned Jews — never felt the desire to build up systems of doctrine. There never existed any systematic theology of the synagogue." Wernle, *Beginnings of Chris.* i. 223.

bearings of the new gospel upon the great problems of human destiny, and you will be well rewarded for your search. Paul answers the questions of the first century not of the twentieth, but with a largeness and elevation of view which reduces our sectarian schedules to their proper insignificance. His task was great: to prepare his people for the coming change while it was yet time; to snatch from perdition as many as his words could reach, and make them sharers with himself in the impending glories of the kingdom.¹

Our most fertile source of information on these points is the Epistle to the Romans. Much pains have been taken to make this out an intentional and comprehensive exposition of the Apostle's gospel. We are reminded that he is addressing the Romans, and naturally would give to so central a church a complete outline of the Christian faith. But unfortunately the broken and fragmentary plan of the writing, with its

¹ 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, ix. 1, 22, 23-27; 2 Cor. i. 12-14; R. ii. 3-10; 2 Th. i. 5-10; Kabisch, 37; Réville, *Les Origines*, i. 195.

lack of logical sequences, does not lend itself to that idea, and we shall get much nearer to Paul himself if we regard this letter, like all the others, as growing out of the exigencies of some special situation. Only by forcing the connection of chapter with chapter, or of one division with another, can we extort any consecutive statement of belief.¹ The very title of the epistle arouses questions difficult to answer. The writer seems to be addressing a community which he knows well and has long intended to visit, finding at last an opportunity to do so; yet if the Book of Acts is to be trusted Paul's coming to Rome was only by compulsion, at the very close of his ministry,

¹ The last two chapters are so full of incongruities, if addressed to the Romans, that they are generally considered doubtful. The earliest collector of Paul's Epistles (Marcion) omits them, showing that they may have been added at some later time to the original letter. Other critics question other portions. See Holtz. Hand-Comm., II. Einleitung zu Rm. vii. It should be added that the supposition that the letter is addressed to the Romans rests wholly on two verses, i. 7, 15, which some manuscripts omit. (Holtz. II. 78.) Apart from these verses the epistle has no Roman complexion whatever. For a recent analysis of the fragmentary character of the Romans, see Prof. W. B. Smith in Hibbert Journal, Jan. 1903, 309-334.

not on the way to Spain, but as a prisoner in the hands of the Romans.¹ According to certain passages, moreover, he is writing to a Gentile community, yet he concerns himself throughout with matters of interest almost exclusively to Jewish converts. Instead of plunging ourselves into the chaos of hypotheses which surround the subject, or attempting to adjust the several passages of the epistle to each other, we shall get much nearer to Paul by regarding the letter, if letter it be, as growing out of the spiritual contingencies of the hour, and addressed to a wholly unknown body of believers.

The epistle begins with a sweeping indictment of the wickedness of the world; how elicited we can only guess, but apparently by attacks of certain Jewish converts upon their Gentile companions. The Jews, so far as we can judge, were insisting upon strict obedience to the law, and condemning their fellows for violating its precepts, while at the same time making it a cloak for their

¹ R. i. 9-13, xv. 22-24, 28, 32; A. xxviii. 16-31.

own offences.¹ Paul reminds them that Jews and Gentiles were all under sin alike, that the whole world was full of evil, and that the old Psalmist was right in declaring that "There is none righteous, no not one." God's judgments fall upon all alike, whether Jew or Gentile; "for there is no respect of persons with God." Indeed the law not only did not make men good, it had made men bad; by imposing commandments which they could not meet, and by suggesting longings which it could not allay. But while the law was thus powerless to save the race, and seemed to increase evil rather than to lessen it, this was only to enhance the salvation offered by the new gospel. It made the grace of God in Christ the more abundant. Our unrighteousness did but "commend the righteousness of God."² Paul

¹ R. i. 18-32, ii. 3-6, 21-29. On the common assumption that the letter is a dogmatic treatise, i. 17 is apt to be taken as the kernel of the whole, and the starting-point for all that follows. There is nothing in the text, however, to give this verse special prominence and the usual divisions of the epistle are purely arbitrary. Its intrinsic obscurities are sufficiently great without adding artificial difficulties.

² R. iii. 5, 10, v. 20, 21.

had often insisted upon this point, and had to meet as best he could the charges of his opponents in the Christian ranks. To them he seemed to say: "Let us do evil, that good may come"; "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound"; "Let us sin as we will, because we are not under the law, but under grace."¹

These accusations, which Paul repels here with such vehemence, have evidently sunk very deep into his heart and lead to the most extraordinary passage of personal confession which the New Testament contains. Perhaps it is a chapter out of his earlier mental history, paving the way to his conversion; perhaps the outcome of long and painful brooding since. In any case, language seems hardly strong enough to express the utter inadequacy of the law to satisfy the moral instincts. He cannot forget that it is holy and spiritual, as the creation of God, yet it had power to induce an inner struggle which it could not appease. It created lusts by the very process of for-

¹ R. iii. 5-8, vi. 1, 15.

bidding them. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Yet I had not known sin but by the law: [here Paul passes suddenly from his general argument to a profoundly personal one.] For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not lust. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." The law gave to sin a fatal weapon, as he declares, by which he himself was slain. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. . . ." The power of sin over him became absolute. It took possession of him; paralyzed his will; forced him to do what he would not; brought him into a captivity from which he could not escape. "For what I do, I know not; for not what I would do I, but what I hate, that I do. . . . Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the

good that I would, I do not : but the evil which I would not that I do. . . . I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." The sense of mortal conflict between the soul's purer instincts and the propensities of the flesh, never found more passionate utterance than in these words of Paul. It is a struggle of which he is still bitterly conscious, and which means for him the absolute failure of the law as the sole means of salvation. "For I delight in the law of God after the inner man ; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." As we follow his fiery language we seem to be standing with him at the very moment when the old life became intolerable to him, and the new life claimed him. Whenever that moment came, before Damascus or after, it brings his moral personality to the front with a force that reveals, as nothing else reveals, the secret of his entire career. He had found his escape from a moral

collapse in the coming of Christ. "O wretched man that I am—who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."¹

From this malign power against which the law had proved impotent, or able only to aggravate, the new gospel offered the sole escape. This lay in the death of Christ. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." . . . "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the

¹ R. vii. 7-25. At another juncture of his career the law appears to Paul a stumbling-block because absolute obedience is impossible (Gal. iii. 10) but here for the profounder reason that it itself provokes to evil. Commentators have demurred at Paul's position here. Pfeiderer regards it as a pessimistic conclusion drawn from Paul's own experiences. "Psychologically this is quite intelligible, but as a historical interpretation of the law, it is wholly one-sided." Urchris. i. 223. Bacon on the other hand finds in this passage an unconscious echo of the noblest philosophy of the times. "The cry that is voicing itself in the agony of this great soul is the cry of broad humanity, as only Stoic philosophy had hitherto struggled to give it utterance, the groaning of the human spirit against this 'body of death,' the deadly legacy of the race." Story of St. Paul, 65.

ungodly.”¹ Had Paul been more familiar with the living Jesus, we cannot believe that he could have placed the main significance of his career in his death, or have dwelt so persistently on that single fact. The memory of the Galilean ministry, with its noble precepts and its sublime self-consecration, would have claimed a more loving appreciation. As it is he returns with untiring persistency to this one theme. “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, — Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”² The explanation of this event, so strange in itself, and so great an offence to both Jew and Gentile, was a serious problem to Paul, and at different hours of his career he evidently solved it in different ways.

His natural resource at first was to the Scriptures; in which, as we have seen, he found prefigured the entire Christian scheme.

¹ R. viii. 3, v. 6.

² 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, ii. 2.

“For I delivered unto you,” he says to the Corinthians, “that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.”¹ As Paul does not tell us what these Scriptures were, we are left to our own conjectures, and I have already pointed out two or three which may have been in his mind.² Another still we may well suppose to be the passage from Deuteronomy which he comments on in the Epistle to the Galatians; a rabbinical interpretation of the purest water. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” By forcing into service a passage intended for quite another purpose, Paul has already shown, following perhaps the commentators of the day, that he who cannot perform all the works of the law, which is impossible, rests under a curse.³ Now he proceeds to

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

² Gal. iii. 10. Comp. Deut. xxvii. 26.

³ p. 126.

argue, citing another verse from Deuteronomy, equally irrelevant, that Christ has bought us off from this universal curse, not indeed by bearing our sins, but by having hung upon a cross. It was the custom to hang the bodies of criminals upon trees after their execution, to add to their disgrace; but the law forbade their remaining after nightfall as their presence polluted the land. Paul sees in the tree a prophecy of the cross, and in the malefactor hanging there a prefiguring of Christ redeeming us from the law.¹ That the offences of one person could be balanced by the sufferings or merits of another, however abhorrent to our ideas of justice, was so familiar a point in Jewish legislation, that this argument, in all its subtleties, would have a weight to his readers which it can hardly have for us.²

¹ Gal. iii. 13; Deut. xxi. 23; J. xix. 31.

² Is. liii. 3-12. This passage was interpreted by the rabbis as referring to the sufferings of the Messiah. (A. viii. 32-35.) For Jewish ideas of vicarious suffering, see Weber, *Jud. Theologie*, § 63; *Pfleid. Paulin.* 137; Toy, *Jud. & Chris.* 272, 3; Clemen, *Paulus, sein Leben, &c.*, ii. 328. See also Weber, § 79. 2. We cannot tell how far Paul is simply using in these passages the familiar or technical language of the synagogue,

If this were Paul's sole statement upon this subject, or if we were to take his allegory as a statement of literal fact, we should have to assume that Christ's redemption of the world lay wholly in the manner of his death, not in the death itself; not through its suffering or its self-abnegation, but in the accident of its being a crucifixion, thus making him ceremonially liable to the curse of the law. The Mosaic precept that the dead body must not hang over night could not have been, in Paul's view, for that trivial purpose alone; it must have had a profounder significance. It was to show that even the ignominious manner of the Messiah's death had its place in the eternal purposes of God.

But it was impossible that such a piece of sheer scholasticism could satisfy the Apostle in his higher moods. Hence a much more serious exposition, suggested to him by the temple ritual. He sees in the death of Christ a final offering for the sins of the

but they lead plainly enough to the later notions of purchase from the devil or from the wrath of God.

world. It was a propitiatory death, of which all previous sin-offerings had been but symbols, awaiting here their fulfilment. "Whom God has set forth as a propitiatory offering, through faith, in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This oft-repeated thought naturally takes different forms in Paul's mind, as he meditates upon the many ways in which the Messiah's death works out the redemption of the race. His sinless death has satisfied all the claims of God's justice, and thus reconciled him to those who, through their sins, were proper subjects of his wrath. Christ has thus wrought for us our reconciliation (translated atonement).¹ "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. . . . And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this

¹ R. iii. 25. Comp. Lev. xvii. 11. Comp. Brückner, Entstehung, 225-231.

reconciliation." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."¹ His death was the only price by which we could be purchased from the power of Satan, or redeemed from the curse of the law. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."² At times Paul is absorbed in the ethical beauty of this transaction, as a supreme token of divine love. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."³ At other times he

¹ R. v. 8-11; 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.

² 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; Eph. i. 7.

³ 2 Cor. viii. 9; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2.

dwells with equal emphasis upon the vengeance which Christ's coming works upon those who are unprepared. "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." He bids the Thessalonians "wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, to deliver us from the wrath to come."¹

The whole subject takes dramatic form in Paul's mind as depicting the two great eras of human life to which we have already alluded, and which epitomize his philosophy of history — the reigns of the first and of the second Adam. He is struck by a grand an-

¹ 2 Th. i. 8, 9, 10; 1 Th. i. 10; R. ii. 6-9.

As Paul, in other passages, is generally understood as looking for a final redemption for all (R. xi. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 28), we should have to assume, in that case, that these were points which he did not attempt logically to reconcile in his mind. To me he seems to be always speaking of those "that are Christ's at his coming." Pfeiderer suggests that he thought of the death of sinners as absolute annihilation; after which God might "have mercy upon all." Urchris. i. 329.

tithesis. Under the first Adam reigned sin and death ; under the second, righteousness and life. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. . . . Therefore as by the offence of one condemnation came upon all men even so by the righteousness of one came unto all justification of life."¹ "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "The first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam a quickening spirit." This solved in imposing style the great problem, as difficult then as now, of the origin of evil in the world. Paul's philosophy, following the Jewish Scriptures and the teaching of the synagogue, was a simple one. Sin found its way into the world through the offence of the first pair. That single act of disobedience infected not Adam alone, but the entire race, and brought in its train the punishment of death. From this universal corruption, of which he speaks so frequently, the deliverance, as in the first instance,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 20-22, 45-47 ; R. v. 12-18.

comes by one ; Jesus Christ, whose righteousness more than balances the first offence. The reign of sin had been allowed indeed only to make the final gift of grace the more conspicuous. "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." That this free offering of divine grace might be the more unstinted, the law appeared to provoke men to greater offences, and make possible the supplanting of death by the great gift of eternal life. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."¹ He says nothing of the Fall of man, leaving that term to the system-makers of later times ;

¹ R. v. 15-21. Paul has much less to say of sins than of sin. Sin is to him a very definite, almost personal, entity. Comp. vii. 8, 9, 11, 17, 20.

but he would certainly have shrunk from none of the extreme consequences of inherited evil or total depravity commonly deduced from that doctrine. For these ideas he had no apology to offer. Once for all, "by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and the whole creation shared the sorrow and the taint. For its season sin and death held uninterrupted sway. The present was an "evil world." It was the reign of Satan. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Only the coming of a Son of God could release the world from this universal bondage.¹

¹ R. vi. 12; Gal. i. 4, iv. 3-5; 2 Cor. iv. 4. How to make Adam responsible for all our sins, and yet to hold each individual accountable for his own transgressions, evidently troubled the Jewish world as much as ours. The solution proposed by the synagogue seems to have been that Adam's fall did not create sinful propensities, but simply increased them, making them more difficult to follow. Free will remained, and sin, although in point of fact universal, turned upon each man's power of resistance. (Weber, §§ 47, 48.) Paul leaves this question aside. He also wisely leaves us to conjecture, when he speaks of "the natural man," or says "in my flesh dwelleth

This dualistic conception, so foreign to both the scientific and the moral notions of our own times, must not be regarded as a mere piece of theorizing or rabbinical subtlety on Paul's part. On one occasion at least it attains a very noble expression, as he contemplates the sufferings of the material world, battling with evil powers and wrestling, through no fault of its own, with the woes brought upon it by human transgression. As it shares in the agonies of the present, it looks eagerly forward also to its share in the great redemption. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present

no good thing," whether he adopts the prevailing theory, current also in the synagogue, of the inherent evil of matter. His questions were practical rather than metaphysical.

It is interesting to find other Jewish writers of the time involved in the same paradoxes. In the Apocalypse of Baruch, we read on one page: "O Adam, what hast thou done to all those who are born from thee? and what shall be said to the first Eve who hearkened to the serpent? For all this multitude are going to corruption." On another page: "Adam was the cause of his soul alone; but each one of us was the Adam of his own soul." The same incongruity appears in 4 Esdras. In each case these conflicting extracts may possibly be from different hands, but they stand side by side in the final composition. Apoc. Baruch, xlviii. 42, 43; liv. 19; 4 Esd. vii. 48-60. Comp. Renan, *Evangelies*, 517-525; Schürer, iii. 2, 83 ff.; Weiss, i. 152; Pfeid. Paulin. 70.

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the universe was made subject to vanity [decay] not of its own accord, but by reason of him who hath subjected it; in the hope that the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Thus the entrance of man upon his higher estate carried with it, according to these messianic dreams, the deliverance of all inanimate things from their convulsions and pains. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together [with us] until now. Nor this only, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." ¹

¹ R. viii. 18-23: v. 20 is capable of various interpretations; as "by reason of him" may refer either to man, who through Adam's fall has brought the curse on the whole universe, or to God who has "subjected it" by his supreme will. The former corresponds better with Paul's thought elsewhere.

How Paul viewed these glories of the coming kingdom, so far as we can judge from his mystic allusions to them, we have already seen.¹ "Flesh and blood," he assures us, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."² It was a kingdom of pure spirit into which the Son of God ushered his followers. The fleshly body, with its taint of evil and subjection to decay, was laid aside, and the body itself became spiritual. For the first time the race became endowed with spirit as well as soul; and entered upon its heavenly career. Man's natural life was ended, and the spiritual life began.³

¹ p. 115-122.

² 1 Cor. xv. 50.

³ An entirely disembodied spirit does not come within the range of these visions. In the heavenly life the body has put off its earthly or fleshly substance, and put on a spiritual substance. 1 Cor. xv. 47-50; R. vi. 6, vii. 18, 22, 24, 25; Gal. iv. 3; Kabisch, 188-194; Pfeid. Paulin. 60-79. If 1 Th. iv. 17, v. 23 were strictly construed as meaning that the present body, without change, was to share in the coming kingdom, it would appear that the conception of the "spiritual body" was part of Paul's later meditations on the theme. But it is possible to be subtler or more scholastic than Paul himself on these points; though no doubt his conceptions became more clearly defined as he went on. See Kabisch, 292, 3; Thackeray, 109.

If this instant entrance of humanity upon its perfect estate affronts our ideas of the gradual process, running through centuries or æons, by which the soul rises to its spiritual inheritance, we must remind ourselves once more that in Paul's outlook upon the future such normal development could have no place. No earthly evolution, or slow unfolding of human history, lay before him. The world had already entered upon its closing scenes. The question how Christianity was to win its way through countless ages did not engage him ; but only, as his language plainly shows, how his own generation might be prepared for the celestial kingdom.

In carrying out this thought of the redemption which Christ's death has wrought Paul has occasion to use one or two terms, familiar to Jewish legalists and meaning much to them, to which the necessities of Christian dogma have given an unhappy

The phrase " spirit, soul, and body," familiar to Greek philosophy, is not found elsewhere in Paul's writings. For contemporary Jewish ideas, see Wis. Sol. i. 4, ix. 15 ; Enoch, xv. 7, 10 ; 4 Esd. vi. 40, xiv. 13, 14 ; Ap. Baruch, i. li. lix.

life. Among these is justification ; a word to which it is no longer possible to give any religious meaning, and which should have been allowed to slumber in the books of the scribes. To them it was of central importance. Before earthly tribunals a man had to be judged according to his deeds, and pronounced guilty, or pronounced pure (or justified), in accordance with the strict letter of the law. "If there is a controversy between men, and they come into judgment . . . the judges shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked."¹ Before the heavenly tribunal, according to the stricter nomistic schools, it was to be the same. God pronounced man pure or guilty, according to his fulfilment or non-fulfilment of the precepts of the law. It was a purely forensic procedure, in which the question of character got very little chance of recognition, but only the number of works of the law which the divine judge could count to

¹ Deut. xxv. 1. The Hebrew word translated "to justify," means to "pronounce just or righteous," to acquit. Job, xxxiii. 32 ; Eccclus. xviii. 2 ; Mt. xii. 37, xi. 19 ; L. xviii. 14 ; Thackeray, 91.

the man's credit or discredit. Faith might come into the reckoning, but only as one performance the more. It was a daily balance, deed by deed, preparatory for the final judgment.¹ Good and bad deeds were sometimes conceived of after the Egyptian fashion as cast into a pair of scales, the weight on one side or the other determining guilt or innocence; while the superfluous merits of one might be thrown in to offset the transgressions of another. The fathers or saints had accumulated a larger store of supererogatory virtues than was needed, and these went to the benefit of their weaker descendants.²

Paul falls naturally into the same language in setting forth the redemptive power of Christ's death, holding absolutely to the central principle, while giving it a new significance. For him also, the divine justice and wrath must have a perfect satisfaction.

¹ Weber, §§ 51, 60.

² Weber, §§ 63, 79; Toy, 272, 3. This idea of the transfer of the merits of the righteous is not unknown to the Old Testament. Job, xlii. 7-10; Gen. xviii. 23-32; Is. liii. 4, 6, 11. Comp. Jas. v. 16. Comp. Apoc. Baruch, xiv. 7, 12, xxiv. 1, lxxxiv. 10.

But for him the thought of rendering that satisfaction by one's own deeds or merits, by whatever alleviating devices the synagogue might offer, had become impossible. In his experience, as we have seen, the law served only to minister to sin. "By the deeds of the law," he declared, "there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." In the place of this unattainable perfection, his gospel offered the free grace of God in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "Not as the offence is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him."¹ As Christ was without sin, his merits could be reckoned exclusively for the righteousness of the world. "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The entire race

¹ R. iii. 20, v. 9, 15; 1 Cor. xv. 3.

enjoyed this, Jew and Gentile alike. God has thus "reconciled the world to himself, no more imputing to them their sins." By Christ's death the claims of the law were at once cancelled, and the record of men's iniquities forgotten. It "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."¹ For ensuring this great result one condition is necessary, but only one; faith in Christ. In the place of the weary fulfilment of all the precepts of the law, the Christian has only to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."² And as this acceptance of Christ brought to the believer eternal salvation, so for the unbeliever the corresponding suffering to which the law had always condemned him. Paul did not demur at this, as his language plainly shows. "In flaming fire

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19, 21; Col. ii. 14.

² R. iv. 5, iii. 28. A man's faith is accepted as outweighing all offences, and the verdict is in his favor. Gen. xv. 6.

taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." It would be a foolish sentiment to soften the meaning of these words which simply reflect the inherited beliefs of the times; beliefs not likely to lose aught of their severity at the hands of so uncompromising a believer in divine retribution as the apostle Paul.¹

This bare statement of the doctrine of justification by faith does poor justice to Paul's real conceptions. He must of necessity follow the conceptions in which he had been bred, and these forensic terms, associated as they had always been with the sublimest religious concerns, easily lent themselves to his Christian ideals. In adopting the new revelation, he at no moment dropped the old, but simply found its ancient formulæ prophetic at every point of

¹ 2 Th. i. 8, 9; R. ii. 5-12; Clemens, Paulus, ii. 9. For the whole subject, see Toy, 183-273; Cone's "Paul," 342-369.

profounder truths. The demands of divine justice were by no means relaxed. The faith in Christ which freed the believer from impossible obligations meant to Paul far more than verbal acquiescence. Faith was one of a noble trinity of virtues ; almost the highest.¹ It meant at its best an absolute surrender of the soul to Christ ; an entering into his very being, and sharing in the mysteries of his death and resurrection. Paul reserves his most exalted speech to express this mystic absorption of the believer in Christ through faith. " We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. . . . I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 13 ; Gal. ii. 16-20 ; 2 Cor. v. 17-21 ; Thackeray, 92. Philo says, in commenting on Gen. xv. 6 : " Some one may say, Do you think this worthy of praise [believing in God merely] ? Even the most infamous of men would listen to God when promising him something. . . . To whom I reply : Do not, good friend, deny the wise man the praise due him, or ascribe to the unworthy that most perfect of the virtues, faith. . . . To believe in God, as alone faithful and true, belongs to a great and celestial mind." Quis Div. 18.

in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : . . . that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." It was a supernatural process throughout, in which the human factor dwindled into insignificance before the free and overwhelming grace of God, and which brought the soul into mysterious relations with Deity. "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God."¹

This attitude towards the older beliefs is still more marked in another passage, on which later theology has seized with violence ; the doctrine of predestination. The apostle was faced, as we have seen, by a troublesome question ; why Israel, the prom-

¹ Phil. iii 8-10; Col. iii. 3.

ised race, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, . . . and the promises," should be passed by in favor of an alien people. To this he might have answered, as at one time he seemed ready to do, "there is no respect of persons with God";¹ all national prejudices must disappear in the blessed spread of a universal Gospel. But Paul was a Jew after all, and found such an argument out of the question. Indeed we admire him none the less when, after so many years of intercourse with the Gentiles, he could still say: "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." It is to their national prophecies that he looks for the solution of the enigma. The Scriptures once more come to his aid. "They are not all Israel," he declares, "which are of Israel."² In one of the most curious passages of his Scriptures, Paul, or the doctors of the

¹ R. ii. 11.

² R. ix. 3-6.

synagogue before him, had discovered that the great promise to Israel was not made to all the children of Abraham, but to the descendants of Isaac alone. To the unregenerate mind, the casting out of Hagar and Ishmael, at the bidding of their jealous mistress, is one of the most pathetic incidents of the patriarchal history ; but to the rabbinical interpreter its pathos is lost in its wonderful prophetic significance. This significance requires great grammatical liberties, it is true, and depends upon the interpreter's immediate preoccupation, but in the present instance, when Jehovah says, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," we are to understand that the words prefigure the final selection of the Gentiles to enter the kingdom with, or even before, the Jews. The promise to Sarah, the wrestling of Jacob and Esau in Rebecca's womb, were to show that the real Jew was not so by fleshly descent but by promise ; was determined that is by the sheer will of God. But is not this unjust to Israel ? No ; for the simplest of reasons. It is God's will, and "there is no unright-

eousness with God.”¹ When he set Jacob before Esau, solely because he loved the one and hated the other, he vindicated his arbitrary choice in preferring the Gentile before the Jew. As he showed favor to Moses, not because of Moses’ deserts, but purely of his own accord, saying “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion,” as he brought destruction on Pharaoh, not for his iniquities, but for the purpose of “showing his power in him,” and that “the name of Jehovah might be declared throughout all the earth,” so to-day he “has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.”²

This makes short work of free-will. I think if the question of free-will as against predestination had been put to Paul at this time, if he had listened at all, he would

¹ R. ix. 7-14; Gen. xxi. 12, 13. In Gal. iii. 16, where the same Hebrew word comes in (seed), but where Paul wishes to confine it to Christ alone, he claims that in its original use it meant one person (Gen. xiii. 15); here he forgets that comment and restores to the word its real sense.

² R. ix. 15-18. Paul forgets Wis. Sol. xii. 1-10, which might have taught him a nobler doctrine.

have promptly thrust it aside as a fantastic problem. Free-will — there is no will but God's. Man's will at the hand of God is as clay in the hands of the potter. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Paul applies this principle relentlessly. If God allows even his chosen people to become "vessels of wrath," it is to show the more plainly his own glory and his mercy to those whom he has really called. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."¹ It is hard to explain away these words, or translate them into the innocuous equivalents of our mod-

¹ R. ix. 20-24.

ern speech. Rather take them as they stand, and see what mighty moral force Paul found in this absolute sufficiency of the divine will. He shrinks from no logical results. If Pharaoh be conceived as protesting against the sacrifice of his person and realm to save the people of Jehovah, he would be told: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my purpose in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." So with the Jews. The Law against whose workings they were protesting, was sent for this very purpose; that they, falling from grace through their disobedience to it, should thus create and magnify the transgressions which the sacrifice of Christ alone was able to remove. "The law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."¹ All this, as we have seen, was for the sole glory of God.

¹ R. v. 20, 21.

Modern thinkers, weary of the negations of our latter-day ethics, may well rejoice in the downright philosophy of the apostle Paul. Of our ethical problems, or the exigencies of modern metaphysics, he was sublimely unconscious. In the predestined scheme of divine government, with humanity tarrying upon the earth till the Son of God should appear, to usher the elect into the joys of eternal life, the troubles of the Ishmaels and Pharaohs, the Gentiles and the hardened Israelites, were to his mind but petty incidents of the passing moment, losing themselves in the larger process of the ages.¹

¹ The question of free-will seems to have caused the same confusion of thought among the Jewish doctors as in modern times. They held strictly, as we have seen, to Adam's fall; they tried to hold also that each one of Adam's posterity was responsible somehow for his own iniquities. "Talmud and Midrash ascribed freedom of will to man even after the Fall. Each one becomes sinful only through his individual offences." Weber, §§ 50, 51. Adam indeed corrupted the whole race, but only as weakening the impulse to good, leaving each one then to fight his own battle. Such seems to have been their argument, leading to natural conflicts of theory. According to Josephus, the Essenes held that all our actions are governed by fate; the Pharisees that fate determines some of our acts but not others; the Sadducees that all actions are in our own

But to Paul this could not remain a purely impersonal or academic argument. In the midst of it, we are not surprised to find his national affections asserting themselves invincibly, and forcing him into a more optimistic vein. He cannot forget his love for the race which he seems so ruthlessly to have condemned. "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."¹ The eloquent passage which follows is a fitting close to the discussion of the fated part which Jew and Gentile were acting in this august drama. It was a "mystery" which he Paul was now able for the first time to reveal; one of the hidden secrets "which in other ages was not

power. Ant. xiii. 5, 9; Bell. Jud. ii. 8, 14. Ecclesiasticus in two different chapters gives the two different views: xv. 11-20; xxxiii. 10-15. So with Baruch (perhaps by different writers), xlviii. 42, liv. 15. The same wavering is found in 4 Esd. iv. 30, viii. 1-3, vii. 48 on one side; viii. 56-60, on the other. As compared with all these authorities, Paul's attitude, judging from R. vii. 18-23 and R. ix. 14-23, seems unequivocal.

¹ R. xi. 1, 2.

made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”¹ The Scriptures had held this secret from the beginning. As in the days of Elias God reserved to himself seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, “Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” The blindness of Israel, the seeming preference of the Gentiles, had its divine purpose. “I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy.” The entrance of the Gentiles will prove, as Paul assures them, but the preparation for the repentance of Israel. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part has happened to Israel,

¹ R. xi. 25; Eph. iii. 2-6.

until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."¹

This involves again the unwelcome thought that God must have known all this, and willed it from the beginning. It is pure election on his part; and election, not of works or of merits, but of grace.² This has no terror for the apostle, trained in the wisdom of the day. No word, as we have seen, falls more easily from his lips than the "elect," the "called," the "perfect."³ The only difficulty in understanding this doctrine arises from trying to evade

¹ R. xi. 2-36. While Paul claims that "all Israel shall be saved," of the fate of those outside Israel he has nothing to say. In all his writings which have been preserved, he seems to have in view those only who "are Christ's" (1 Cor. xv. 23). See Everett, *Gos. of Paul*, 273. The whole of Chap. V is instructive.

² R. xi. 5, 6.

³ R. i. 6, 7; ix. 24. 1 Cor. i. 2, ii. 6.

the plain meaning of Paul's words, and forgetting his complete acceptance of God's sovereignty. Once view man's earthly life as absolutely preordained of God, and all the rest, in Paul's view, follows without need of argument. For the "called according to his purpose," all things "work together for good." "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . . Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"¹ On these points, and all connected with them, Paul has no reserves, and is troubled by no paradoxes, but rather glories in them. He would not have asked his followers, in the most distant ages, to tone down his words. Whatever be involved, God's perfect majesty must be untouched; his foresight, his will, his free and unpurchased grace, his eternal glory. At last, in the coming and

¹ R. viii. 28-33.

death of Jesus of Nazareth, this divine scheme becomes clear, and fully vindicated in all its parts; the life of the flesh, and the life of the spirit; the period of the law, with its impossible fulfilments and growing transgressions, the period of grace with its abundant mercies for those whom God has appointed to receive them. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever."¹

If the above record of Paul's beliefs seem fragmentary and unsystematic, it must be remembered that the sources from which we draw are themselves fragmentary and sadly brief. I have given Paul's thoughts as they interpret themselves to me. However deeply we may feel the injustice to

¹ R. xi. 33-36.

a great thinker of judging him by such broken utterances, without the glow of conviction that was behind them, it is far better I am sure to leave them as fragments, than to try to fashion them into either mediæval or modern dogmas. The latest rationalism and the earliest orthodoxy are equally foreign to the attitude of this Jewish convert, shaping his ingrained traditions to the early dawnings of a new revelation. From the standpoint of the church theology, there are strange omissions in these epistles; vast dogmatic gaps unfilled. Paul has nothing to say of a Trinity,¹ nor of the Deity of Christ,² nor of a personified Holy Spirit.

¹ Paul's nearest approach to a trinitarian formula is 2 Cor. xiii. 14, where he groups together three distinct modes of divine grace, without any hint of their oneness. If a real triad, Christ, as mentioned first, is at the head of it. Passages like 2 Cor. iii. 17, which make Christ identical with the Holy Spirit, show how far Paul is from working out any metaphysical theory on this point. His subordination of Christ to God is unequivocal. (1 Cor. iii. 23; xi. 3; xv. 28). If Paul must needs be made out a trinitarian (unless we are content with such triads as 1 Cor. xii. 4-6, Eph. iv. 4-6, or R. xi. 36), his trinity would have to be "God, Christ, and the God of this world," (2 Cor. iv. 4; ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11.) who is still trying to hold his own against the true God (1 Cor. xv. 25-28.).

² R. ix. 5, if translated correctly in the common version, would be the only exception to this statement. It is quite pos-

Regeneration, Atonement, Incarnation,¹ are foreign names to Paul, however we may succeed in making his language at times reflect these ideas. As both ancient and modern treatises prove, Paul does not lend himself easily to ecclesiastical schedules, but leaves all the partisan war-cries, Augustinian and Pelagian, or even Catholic and Protestant, quietly aside. And if he found no occasion to systematize his Christian faith, or to anticipate the necessities of modern theology, why should we not accept this fact in its full significance? As we study his life, we find ourselves by no means looking into a mind illumined by a sudden flash of divine intelligence, or provided from the start with a formulated faith, but rather into a mind which is adjusting step by step its inherited tenets to the new light which was filling

sible, however, to place a period after Christ, and read "God who is over all be blessed forever." The most serious objection to the common reading is that it would be the *only* case where Paul makes God and Christ one; and we should hardly expect him to introduce so colossal a conception, contradicting all other statements, in so incidental a way.

¹ No Incarnation is to be found in the Epistles unless it be "in the likeness of sinful flesh." R. viii. 3.

his soul. Such experiences, if genuine, do not come in the form of instant and final intellectual apprehensions, but of many successive insights into deeper truths. We may well believe that this was a process quite incomplete even at his death. We may think ourselves fortunate, children of a distant generation, if we can recover some of these passing insights, or place ourselves at his side in the several moments of his dawning faith.

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